"Becoming Ahuman: making it desirable to abandon certainty, including certainty of the self, and play in this chaotic situation"

Uma Officer

This book is one of three volumes which constitute the thesis (to be read in any order) and is subtitled "Ahuman Use".

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Northumbria at Newcastle.

Department of Arts

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Acknowledgements

Declaration

This work has not been submitted for any other award, and consists of my work alone, whilst fully acknowledging the opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others. Versions of texts included between the three books of this thesis were presented under the following titles:

- "Bio-film Mansion Theory, or Making as Collaboration with Disorder" delivered at "Interdisciplinary Conversations Around Making", Newcastle University, Newcastle, 2019.

- "There is no reason for you to live: gendered trauma and ecstasy in 'No World Dreamers, Sticky Zeitgeist episode 2: Aperitif'" delivered at "Beyond the Console: Gender and Narrative Games", London South Bank University, London, 2019.

- "Smeared into The Environment: Queer Horror games and The Ahuman" delivered at "Horror, Cult, Exploitation II", Northumbria University, Newcastle, 2018.

- "Smeared into The Environment: Queer Horror games and The Ahuman" delivered at "Don't Look: Representations of Horror in the 21st Century Symposium", University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, 2018.

- "Bio-Film Assemblages and Ahuman Horror" delivered at "Current Research in Speculative Fiction", University of Liverpool, Liverpool, 2018.

- "The Revolutionary Praxis of Urban Galls" delivered at "Open Graves Open Minds & Supernatural Cities present: The Urban Weird" University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, 2018.

- A version of the document "Farmer 9" was published by Res., London in the publication "Alembic" in 2018.

- A version of the document "Axpansion" was published by Paperwork, London in the publication "Paperwork Issue 3: lilwimi lipsing" in 2018

- A radio-play version of "The Keeper's Diary" was performed for Rádio Quântica in 2017 and again for Dublin Digital Radio in 2018.

- A video stream version of "The Woodlands Outside The Finishing Plant" was performed for the exhibition "Sex and Other States" at South Kiosk Gallery, London in 2018

- A live version of "The Use of Horror in Art Practice" and "The Woodlands Outside The Finishing Plant" were performed at Reading University in 2018

- A live version of "The Use of Horror in Art Practice" was performed for the event "Its Origins are Indeterminate" at Whitechapel Gallery, London in 2018

- Two live versions of "The Incomplete Provocation" and

"The Keeper's Diary" were performed at Serf, Leeds and Res., London in 2017

- A live version of part of "Borne by Rats" was performed at Baltic, Gateshead in 2017

- A video version of each of the three parts of "The Androids' Journey" was shown at the exhibition "Green Fuzz" at Xero, Kline & Coma, London in 2016

All procedures for ethical approval have been followed and the number of words contained in the three books of this Thesis – excluding bibliography (academic references), footnotes and appendices – is 77,706.

Signed   Uma Officer   UMAO

Contents [KEYWORDS]

Abstract

Title: "Becoming Ahuman: making it desirable to abandon certainty, including certainty of the self, and play in this chaotic situation"

Ralph Dorey, Northumbria University, 2020.

This research brings together resonating creative processes from feminist literature, game design, queer gender politics, post-structuralist philosophy, and horror cinema. It uses these to articulate an art practice which is unstable and generative both for the artist during the process of production, and again for the audience.

The PhD output as combined thesis and practice consists of three books, each approaching the question, "How to negotiate art practice as involving processes which are unstable, affective, and resistant to structures?" Each book takes a different position regarding this question and in doing so reshapes it into a sub-question.

The book "Ahuman Desire" explores the question "How to negotiate art practice as involving affects which are at some times indescribable, or overwhelming?"

The book "Ahuman Use" explores the question "How to negotiate art practice as involving salvaged or stolen systems, which are always already breaking down?"

The book "Unknown Lacuna" explores the question "How to negotiate art practice as involving unstable things which can only be seen through what they do?"

Each engages the same question, but with a different emphasis. They are three different attempts and the obvious implication is that these are three of many more potentially attempts

I have undertaken an extensive literature review across fields which border on art practice. The three books bring together a vast matrix of research sources and makes these visible and accessible as an act of care, in keeping with the feminist writing practices which underpin the work. I have developed original methodologies which are used in the different documents across the three books and include the use of speculative fiction, plagiarism, formalist writing strategies, drawing, performance, games, and screenplays as research. As well as using artworks as a site to examine the relationships between different theories of creative process. The rigour of the PhD Output exists not just in the scale of the sources processed and responded too, but

in its infrastructural approach which departs from academic norms to resist a cataloguing or hierarchical envelope for the knowledges within.

The PhD Output addresses one of its returning processes of Excess through its form. It is large in scope and shifts responsibility to the reader to navigate this Excess. This demonstrates the affects of anxiety address in many of its documents, before the aforementioned attention to acts of care re-frame this disorder as generative. This mirrors the repeated conceptual and narrative refrain in many documents whereby the horror of the unknown is reorientated to become a creative and dynamic approach to knowledge which does not need to be fixed or enveloped.

The PhD Output aims to support reader engagement based on their desire, rather than through an external economy that ascribes or denies a degree of value based on adherence to pre-existing parameters. This approach is a departure from the common structures of academic research, while still demonstrating critical judgment and original contributions to knowledge. The departure is necessary firstly because of the research questions above, and secondly the commonality of destabilisation in the source materials from feminist writing practices and philosophy, to collaborative games and horror media. Thirdly, the departure enables the specificity of the practice based PhD Output to not just describe processes but to enact them at the

reader's point of encounter with the research.

The primary findings of the research are. The potential for the form of Tabletop Role Playing Game Manuals to inform an art practice when combined with the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The mutual illumination offered when combined with feminist writing practices or Écriture Féminine. The potential for Écriture Féminine to inform contemporary queer feminist art practices which incorporate the forms of video-games, as well recognising the event of audience encounter with such artworks as a creative one. The use of horror cinema as a means to articulate art practice concerned with affect. The potential of practice-based art research to produce new ways to produce and deliver original research in a dynamic rather than fixed structure.

This research is of value due to its relevance to contemporary practice. This relevance is evidenced by the recent attention to queer indie game design ('Beyond the Console', n.d.; Faber, 2019; Humphreys, n.d.; Thaddeus-Johns, 2019; Wallace, 2019), experimental feminist writing practices incorporating speculative fiction (Hedva, 2018; Hval, 2018; Jackson & Leslie, 2018; Waidner, 2019), the divisive concept of "elevated horror" (Carrol, 2019; Crump, 2019; Ehrlich, 2019; Gardner, 2019; Taylor, 2019), and the folding of these into art practice. The research include in-depth analyses of artworks

by two artists who have relatively recently received a high international profile (Apexart, 2019; 'Dark Continent: Semiramis Performance | Arts Council Collection', n.d.; 'Porpentine Charity Heartscape', n.d.; Tate, n.d.) and have not yet been the subject of monographs or a large amount of academic study, particularity within the field of art. The relevance of this research is further supported by the recent publications and events in a overlapping fields (Brazil, 2019; Burrows & O'Sullivan, 2019; Editorial Staff, 2019; Fisher, 2018; 'Flickering Monstrosities Hyperfiction Reading Group', 2019; 'ICA | I, I, I, I, I, I, I, Kathy Acker', n.d.; Lewis, n.d.; Little, 2019; Pyrne, 2019; Shaw & Reeves-Evison, 2017).

Keywords:

Abjection, Kathy Acker, Affect, Art, Georges Bataille Gilles Deleuze, Hélène Cixous, Cybernetics, Écriture Féminine, Félix Guattari, Porpentine Charity Heartscape, Horror Cinema, Luce Irigaray, Patricia MacCormack, Performance, Play, Queer Theory, Role Playing Games, Tai Shani, Speculative Fiction, Video Games.

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Notes on Use

This PhD output is a combination of what might otherwise be separated into thesis and practice. It uses different writing styles, and different conventions of text to do different things.

One of the styles and conventions used is that of the film screenplay. The screenplay is used both to account for art practice elements within this PhD which exists in forms other than the written word, and as a kind of art practice in its own right. I follow artist Emma Bolland's use of the term "traduction-retour" or "'backwards translation', or translation through return" (Bolland, 2018, p. 204) to describe the process of producing a screenplay after the release of the film, or in this case, videos and performances, it accounts for. I have used the screenplay form in my work because even as traduction-retour points forward and invites speculation. It is always a means to produce something else, and it is always incomplete because the transition from text to cinema is not seamless.

The screenplay has conventions, and I have had to break some of these. As Bolland notes, *traduction-retour* screenplays are sometimes "redesigned entirely for a specific readership" (Bolland, 2018, p. 204), and in this case

that readership includes this PhD's examiners. As a result of exploring a number of ways in which the screenplay format can accommodate the academic requirements of referencing arguments, I have compromised the former slightly to avert accidental plagiarism through unclear referencing.

An important text convention used in the three books of this PhD Output concerns reading.

The books are meant to be read in any order, but they are meant to be read together. The model is taken from *Tabletop Role Playing Games* where there is often:

- A *Games Master Manual* containing the rules for the *Games Master,* the person running the game.
- A *Player Manual* which each *Player* has a copy of and contains rules for them.
- A *Reference Book* of some sort which lists of things in the world of the game and their rules, and is used by both *Players* and *Games Master.*

Either *Player* or *Games Master* will frequently have to refer to their *Manual* in combination with the *Reference Book*, reading them at the same time, building something from the combination of rules and lists.

Tabletop Role Playing Games are not competitive activities, but better understood as processes of collaborative storytelling. The game, or story, arises from between the *Players* and the *Games Master,* each working from a *Manual* which contains only one side of the systems which make up the game, and combining this with the *Reference Book* in different ways. A shifting composite of these positions is a "collective effervescence" a collaboratively constructed "world entirely different from the one they have before their eyes" (Durkheim, 1995, p. 228).

Each book comprises methods, speculations for further work, documented attempts, fictions, maps, and diagrams, the books are orientated so that *Documents* within sometimes arrive concurrently. While reading one *Document*, smaller ones appear to the side.

Each book begins with an interactive narrative which crosses all three books, and offers choices which fork and result in different endings.

The books use a *Keyword* system. Some *Documents* include *Keywords* which are written in hard brackets such as [DIAGRAM]. The titles of some *Documents*, and their entries in each book's contents page features a list

of their keywords. The *Keywords* are to encourage the reader read the books concurrently. *Keywords* present a point to cross to another book and pick up another document using the same *Keyword*, from a different approach.

Notes on Use; Bibliography

- Bolland, E. (2018). The Iris opens/The Iris closes: Le Silence #2 Scene Notes 1–13. Journal of Adaptation in Film & Performance, 11(2), 203–216. https://doi.org/10.1386/jafp.11.2.203_1.
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Advice

Mark the pages of each book as you read them. The books are meant to be read by moving between them, and getting lost is part of the process of making connections. But in order to be sure that the reader has seen everything it is recommended that they foul the pages by some means in passing, so it will be easy to round up the stragglers at the end.

Alpha Alpha Niner Twenty

A non-linear multi-ending story about care.

[This story has three endings, and your choices matter. It will direct you across all three of the books of this PhD Output, its narrative encircling but not connecting with, all of the other documents You could skip if for now, or finish one of its endings, or follow it until it gets boring and move to whatever document is on the same page when you decide to give up.]

Alpha Alpha Niner Twenty is the same kind of diplomatic hub platform you've seen a thousand times. From where you are at the shuttle terminal, it appears in the near distance as an impressive metallic gloss black cube and is of a size you won't even guess at as its hard to spot where the building ends and the night sky above begins. Like much civil architecture in this area, it sits on one of the spiked lily pads which form a major part of the ecosystem of the meridian sea which belts this planet.

You open the sealed pouch that can be opened by you alone and read the final two paragraphs of the advisory again which against protocol you tore off and saved before destroying the rest;

"This entire project can be understood in terms of Broken Cybernetics. The diplomat's art, like the production of all art, involves using systems which are in a continuous state of breaking on all levels. In some ways, this is the very nature of diplomacy but what your training and this advisory will have already made clear is that there is a difference between the layperson's understanding of diplomacy and the work of an agent. Your responsibility is not to balance forces, just as it is not to ensure the domination of one force over all the others, not least because each of these ideological positions, the stillness of compromise or annihilation, are impossible in a material sense.

No, an agent's responsibility is to Events, the points where the system breaks and something new is created. Your responsibility to these Events is to extract a copy of the unstable Diagram of their occurrence, so it might be re-used again after everything that made it destroyed. Good luck on your mission, destroy this advisory before arrival."

Turn to the next page.

Wait, who are you ?

Think about how you ''feel''.

Of the three options, which is your strongest feeling?

Hunger, turn to page 27 of Ahuman Desire

Thirst, turn to page 40 of Ahuman Use

Fatigue, turn to page 32 of Unknown Lacuna
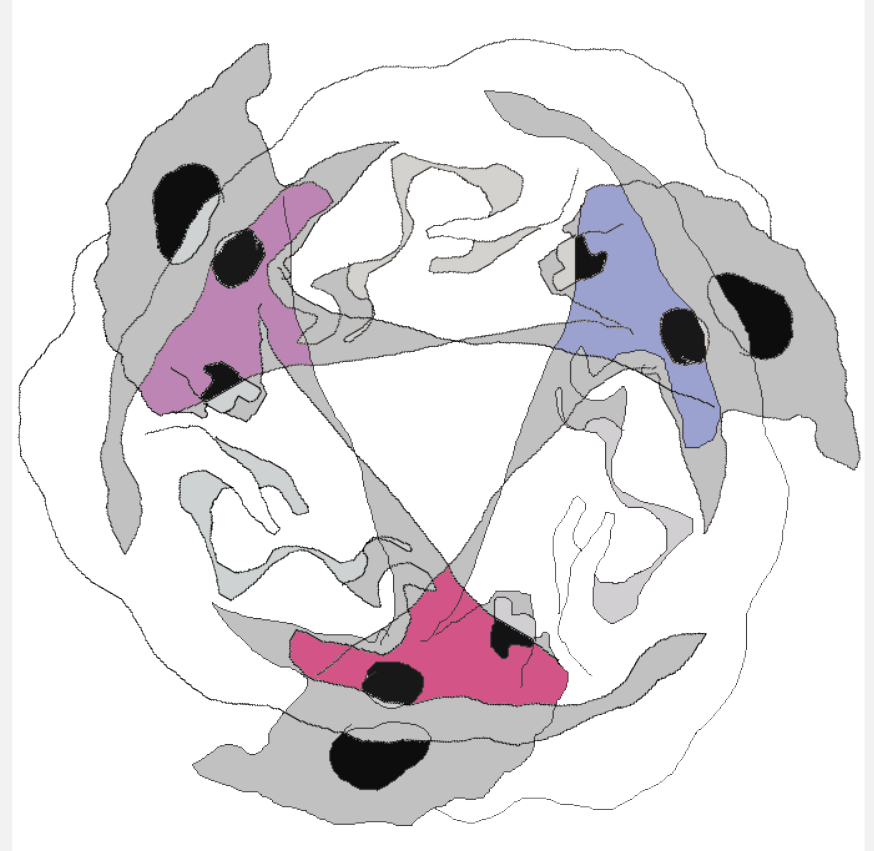
PhD [Diagram]

Field Notes on Agents [DIAGRAM, RPG]

This document is explores the manner in which the books which contain the rules and provocations for playing a game like Dungeons and Dragons can offer insight into an approach to art practice which is concerned with the modulation of the self, and systems which emerge and mutate.

Field Notes on Agents Part One: The Structure of Tabletop Role Playing Game Manuals

A Tabletop Role Playing Game (TTRPG) is an activity in which players role play through imagined situations, primarily through speech, as well as potentially though systems of chance such as dice rolling. Although it is referred to as a "game" it is best thought of as a collaborative storytelling system which combines a combination of pre-existing narrative of "lore", improvisation within and deviations from this lore, a systems of chance. Throughout this document *TTRPG* will be used to refer to the set of rules and lore which go together i.e. "Dungeons and Dragons", and the word *Game* will refer to the actual activity of playing a *TTRPG.*

Mountain Web [LACUNA]

For commercially produced *TTRPGs*, a series of books or digital files contain the rules and other information required to play. These publications are here referred to as manuals, though the terminology for such books may vary.

There are a great number of *TTRPG* systems, which is the underlying system which governs the game, primarily establishing an order to how role playing and chance interact. There might be numerous *TTRPGs* which use the same or modified versions of the same system, and each of these may be further subject to new revised editions, and third party revisions either authorized or fan made. One of the most popular, and arguably the most visible face of *TTRPGs* in English speaking culture at the time of writing is "Dungeons & Dragons, 5th Edition" (5E) (Crawford, Wyatt, Schwalb, & Cordell, 2014; Mearls & Crawford, 2014; Mearls, Crawford, & Perkins, 2014). For simplicity document will reference the mechanics from *5E*, however the general observations and hypothetical examples do not reference a specific system of text, but are an illustrative composite compiled from a number of sources (Ackerman-Gray, 1996; Axtell, n.d.; Blankenship, 1990; Bond, 1987; Brimmicombe-Wood, 1997; Coffin, 1999; Durall & Johnson, 2008; Galeotti, 1991; McCall & Siembieda, 1990; McCubbin, 1995; Nakazono, 1989, 1991; Nakazono & McKenzie, 1991; Perrin & St Andre, 1987; Petersen & Willis, 2005; Pondsmith et al., 1993; Pulver, 2002; Pulver, Berry, Punch, & Smith, 1997; Quintanar, 1994; Spivey & Reece, 2017; Sprange, 2004; Wujcik,

1987, 1990; Zeigler, n.d.)

It is quite common for *TTRPG* manuals to include lists of things within the game world. Common examples would include items and equipment to be acquired and used by the characters.

Characters might be controlled by either the *Players* who typically control one "Player-Character" each, the "role" which they are playing, or the "Games Master" (GM) who is responsible for all other characters which the *Player-Characters* encounter, as well as any other events such as shifts to the environment, time, global politics, etc.

These items or equipment may be specific to the "world" in which the *TTRPG* is set.

The *World* is not just the area of time and space in which the game is set, for example mid 1980s Moscow, or Eastern Seaboard between 1400 and 1492. The *World* could be something which differs from our understanding of our accepted reality. For example, the *World* might be an earth in which gravity is considerably less strong than our own leading to different technologies and ecologies. Or the *World* is one where earth contains an entire ecosystem within its hollow interior. Or the Black Death killed an even

Farmer Nine [LACUNA, MANSION]

Bracket fungus (yellow) with fish hook through it, some liquid dripping through the basin stained darker orange with rust.

#

Agent 7235's suit has a soft recharge glow at the cuffs and collar. This is bluing the white embossed panelling of the container's insides. It's an aesthetic feature that cheap protective suits have, the blue glow registering even the smallest trickle through the kinetic or heat sink chargers that power everything else that keeps a body alive. The blue glow now signifies a lack of wealth as well as recharging life support. Even a modestly priced suit uses some other indicator like a non-intrusive amount of haptic feedback at the base of the spine or a subtle chemical direct to the brain. There is of course a black market in warranty-voiding bio-edits to disable the glow, but this already a mark of passé hipsterism, costing more than a store brand mid-tier unit. Rural teenagers might tape off the lights or add even more from a secondary power source. 7235's suit is cheap enough for the company.

#

The agent is here at Farmer Nine, a port off the ionic pole sea of the Diane, a company-owned moon terraformed with water pulled from the Kuiper Belt.

#

higher percentage of the population of Europe, leading to different balance of global culture and power over the following centuries.

Even if the *World* of the *TTRPG* is indistinguishable from our own reality, it is common for the manual to list items, in order to provide details on how these example items are articulated through the *Mechanics* and economies of the *TTRPG*. Simple examples of the economies of an item would be its weight and its price range in local currency for purposes of trade. It is possible for price to be attached to another modifier, for example the item "a kilo of heroin" might not have a single example price range but rather a range for heroin produced in a government laboratory, and a different one for heroin produced by a large crime syndicate. Other economies might be attached to the item other than monetary value. Continuing with our example of a kilo of heroin, attached to this may be statistical chances of; Overdose, illness due to contamination, addiction and so on[1]. Also the statistical chances of these secondary values of the heroin could be different depending on whether it is made by the government or by private companies.

Mechanics as mentioned above refers to how the item functions through the specific systems of the game, which are mostly systems of chance. An example *Mechanic* could be if a player wishes to use some of the heroin as an anaesthetic, the *GM* decides that the outcome of this action is not

The oceans of Diane are dotted with bridged archipelagos and a number of completely self supported structures in the shallows - rentable lab space leased by the century. According to requirements, an area is staked out with submarine pillars which support a membrane encircling the leased body of water and topped with a decking structure 100 metres or so above the waterline. This structure is called a wharf. On a wharf, clients build construction bays, sensor pods or wet labs as well as units within the annexed sea itself, which is the main lab space for bioengineering, viral tech, swarm tests and so on. The composition of this rented sea is utterly customisable. Neighbouring wharfs encircle a body of liquid with almost nothing in common other than being heavier than the atmosphere.

#

The company has owned Diane for longer than 7235 has been around. Corporations live at the scale of a species, rather than a lifetime. Back in the fogged time this moon's purchase and retooling was a gamble on a then forthcoming techno-political turn. Not a complete mistake, but Diane now has barely more than 7% rented space in use. However the moon still runs outside of a loss, is self-sufficient, and supports an inestimable number of lives over its centuries of activity. Wet construction and maintenance take human labour. A project will run across generations before a research arc is completed in a choral gene sump, kilometres across and lousy with improvisations and hacks. Quasi-municipal buildings concerned with infrastructure

decided by them alone, but is handed off in part to a relevant *Mechanic*.

A full analysis of why a *GM* might let this outcome be decided by chance, rather than making the decision themselves is outside the remit of this document, but it is worth observing that with various frequency a *GM* could use such mechanics to put an outcome outside of the control of either them or the players to some degree.

The relevant *Mechanic* in our example could be what is often called a "Ability check" (Crawford et al., 2014, p. 7) which is used when a player attempts to have their character perform an action where success is not certain. Like items, characters frequently have values attached to them. The character can, on one level, be broken down into a number of values for various attributes. In *5E* these are referred to as "ability scores" and are "Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, and they typically range from 3 to 18 for most adventurers" (Crawford et al., 2014, p. 7). In making an *Ability Check* a player will roll a twenty sided dice (D20), add to this the value of their character's relevant *Ability Score*, with the intent of surpassing the target number or "difficulty class" (Crawford et al., 2014, p. 7) set for this action by the *GM*. The *GM* decides both the *Difficulty Class* for the action based on how difficult the desired outcome appears to be, and which of the character's *Ability Scores* is the relevant

all feature crew accommodation. Canals of algae and flowers provide residents food and essential elements for the atmosphere.

#

Some crew care for the bridge network, which connects wharves to hubs to islands upon islands and more wharves, like a protein chain. Building, repairing, dismantling, sealing - the custodians are uprooted and rebuilt whenever the Diane AI directs them.

#

The AI developed staff training protocols centuries ago which are now company standard. It has barely taxed itself in decades. Most banal jobs like ordering printer material, biological samples, shipping and labour improvement, investment, legal affairs, security and auditing are done through daemon back protocols. Autonomous code. This is the company's biggest achievement; a facility incredibly complex but also sublimely stupid and therefor utterly discrete.

#

Agent 7235 drops down from orbit and around to Farmer Nine on a green-grey polymer skid. Rendered in three minutes, still stinking of ammonia and tacky under the handles, it is good for nine thousand kilometres after which it can be completely recycled. Parts of the skid can allegedly be digested by humans. On the journey over, the agent reads again the authorising dispatch note. It is customarily brief.

one. For example, a player might be called upon to pass an *Ability Check* by rolling a *D20* plus their character's *Constitution* value of 8, to see whether their character develops an addiction as a result of using heroin, an action which the *GM* has given a *Difficulty Class* of 25.

When establishing the *Difficulty Class* the *GM* might choose to take into account one or more values attributed to the item being used. Within the *TTRPG* manual's list of items the listing for "heroin" might include a relevant value, such as its addictiveness rendered as a number value, in order to distinguish it other potential anaesthetics. Within this hypothetical example *TTRPG's* world, heroin has a relatively high order of addictiveness, and so it's listing carries the attribute "addictiveness" and value "20". The *GM* uses this value in order to establish the basic *Difficulty Class* that the player must beat. In this example they have raised the probability of unwanted addiction even further, perhaps in response to how the game's narrative is developing so far, or to shape where it might go next.

These examples should begin to give an image of the way in which items can be handled within a *TTRPG*. The same principle often applies to more abstract things. For example, the manual may include lists of "skills" which a character can acquire, or might already be possessed by character which theirs encounters. Each *Skill* might have various values attached to it in

7235 had done many visits on less direction. However, these were in the company's orthodox interests of mining, storage and production. Diane is a rarely visited, or considered, piece of the company's history.

#

Slowing to a stop the agent sighs and slides wetly from the skid.

#

7235 looks about the off-white hex patterned interior of Farmer Nine's south dock. That yellow bracket fungus is dripping rust down the wall and green damp-dwelling slime is stretching up to meet it. The room is pulsing in the blue glow powered by 7235's habitual fidgeting. The agent stops flicking the silicone data-port cover with sticky gloves and the blue light dims.

#

This site is a dump.

#

Dented and cracked *Expanda-Pol* crates pile in a filthy sprawl completely against lease agreements.

#

Little organic trickles that refuse to fully mix run across smashed tamper seals as 7235 fails to navigate this barn without disturbance.

#

order that it can be processed through a mechanic. If the example *Skill* was "coding" it might have values which could be favourable modify a roll when attempting to write a piece of custom software within a set time limit. The *Skill* of coding could have other values relating to how much the character could earn selling their skilled labour as a coder, or how regularly they need to conduct research in order to maintain their knowledge of contemporaries coding languages. Within the game, *Skills* function very similarly to items, in that on one level they modify something which encounters them.

The final type of list that is relevant here is that of "Non Playable Characters" (NPCs). These are the cast of characters within the game's world which are controlled by the *GM*. This cast is generally drawn from with degrees of pre-planning and improvisation in order for the characters controlled by the players to have other beings to engage with. Depending on the *TTRPG* system being used, these *NPCs* are likely to have stats in a manner similar to that of the player controlled characters. They might also possess skills and items, which in turn have their own attributes, values, and capacity to engage with *Mechanics*.

NPCs also have the potential to have other properties in relation to their own history, personality, and desires as written by their author. The *NPC* might have a backstory in which a previous event has left them with a

Outside.

#

Hexa-Deck that should be white is crossed with spews of claylike sludge. Scuffed non-slip embossing forms a sea of white Xs between low raised scars of dark red. The whole area is twenty or so meters wide, walled off with large shipping containers, the rotting parts of mixers and churners.

#

7235 steps on from the dock door. Ahead a busted 150kl enzyme tank is resting on its side, one end corroded out to leave a hole to the rest of the wharf. Through the eye shaped hole 7235 can see people running, maybe children, modded suits lit red. They kick up the sediment as they run, vanishing long before the agent stumbles through the crumbling tank.

#

The space here is huge. The shipping containers are piled to each side and everything is caked in brown and red sediment. A straight path runs though this mess like the bed of a recently dammed river. The banks are pocked with holes.

#

To 7235 the stacks look impossible but they can see footprints and wonder if the children have disappeared into one of the holes. Temporary site-lights line the path ahead, making the dark of the banks above even harder to see into. A few hundred

strong preposition to distrust characters from a certain location or within a certain employment. In a comparable manner to the way in which the heroin becomes a modifier which, through a dice roll either develops addiction in a character or not, *NPCs* are able to modify other actions by the players through their characters. A player might have decided that they wish their character to speak to an *NPC* and convince them to assist them in climbing over a wall which they cannot scale on their own. Through the interaction of the player in role as their character and the *GM* in their role as this *NPC* it could be established that due to something disclosed about the player characters passed the *NPC* refuses to help them. The line of progression desire, to scale the wall with the help of the *NPC* is now closed. The player's character must modify their plans and attempt something else.

The modification effect of the player character to *NPC* encounter is not limited to pass-fail situations. The encounter might open up new opportunities not considered, such as the *NPC* having a key to a gate in the wall. They might be the inspiration for a completely different approach, resulting for example in the player character no longer having any reason to pass the wall. In fact these interactions have the potentially to completely the players direction in and approach to the world of the *TTRPG*, all due to the modifying capacity of the values attached to that *NPC*.

metres ahead the gorge twists sharply, hiding everything beyond.

\#

7235 walks on under the lights, still mindful of their footing.

\#

Before the twist in the path they find a downed light pole. Silt run-off from the bank has bent the site-lights' anchor and it now shines back up the wall, here bright red and waxy. This light picks out something else is in the stacks. Studded into the sediment are metre wide yellow objects starting a little above head height and semi-opaque. The surface weave looks similar to other flexi separation membranes printed on site but the pattern is wild as it accommodates additional circuitry and bone. Inside these vessels is a thick liquid. A bubble moves very slowly upward.

\#

The agent now sees that the red clay bank is blistered with these forms which weep run-off into shadow. 7235 can see the vesicles are laid out in precise lines. Beaded blood along fast scratched skin. Lines cover the banks in rows and are broken by a scattering of gaps. 7235 finds themself thinking of something they had once seen written on a forearm with a razor, seeping through wrapped bandage. Almost legible, but completely incomprehensible.

\#

Turning away from the bank, 7235 steps over the twisted light pole and walks on

The presence in *TTRPG* manuals of lists of things which constitute the world, and function as modifiers is one of the main reasons why this PhD Output takes that same form. It is important to note that the playing of a *TTRPG* requires more than one manual. In *5E* for example, each player will have access to the "Player's Handbook" (Crawford et al., 2014). The *GM* however, has the "Dungeon Master's Guide" (Mearls & Crawford, 2014), which contains the information required for their role as distinct from the players. 5E also uses a third book[2] called the "Monster Manual" (Mearls et al., 2014) which is a bestiary of the kind of creatures one can encounter within the fantasy world of Dungeons & Dragons. Each entry contains lore regarding that creature to assist with role playing, along with stats and mechanics which might be specific to that particular creature type and its unique capacities.

Each of these three *5E* books contains information on the system which underpins the game, lists of things which can be integrated into this system and have the potential to modify it, and other material which I will refer to as "provocations". Provocations are things within each book which are to serve as inspiration for creative choices or challenges toward preconceptions and clichés. In *5E*, these Provocations are primarily; artwork which represents characters, settings, objects, and events, quoted fragments of prose from novels set within the *5E* world, and unattributed quotes of lore, and

towards the bend. The lamps stop before the corner but there is enough ambient light to go by. Even so, 7235 turns on the suit's head torch, and a white disc marks where they now look.

\#

Past the corner the banks fall back. Not a trench but an open field far into the horizon ahead. The ground is flat, and the now familiar white Xs still appear at intervals, so this is still a platform above sea and not one of the moon's mountains. The size of this open space is improbable. Platforms are built alongside the construction of their facilities and labs. What's more, these seem to cover the entire body of liquid with no obvious access. 7235 imagines an abandoned bowl of food capped in mould. Silhouetted ahead there are some interruptions to the skyline. A mixed handful of upright and horizontal shipping containers, some pulled by flapping tarps stand a few kilometers off.

\#

7235's head torch flickers to remind them that they need to keep moving. The batteries on these cheap suits are small to counter the weight of the geriatric skin technology and they flick off the spotlight and head toward the circle of upright containers on kinetic charge glow alone.

\#

The ground grows thick, the embossed marks of the printed non-slip surface

miscellanea such as maps, or time-lines of historical events within the world.

This division of information across books, and across the asymmetric roles of *GM* and players is not unique to *5E*, but *5E* set it out in a very clear manner. The game of a *TTRPG* occurs at the meeting between *GM* and players, and across chance based *Mechanics* and role play which is itself a meeting between the established lore of the *5E* world, the specific history of the game as it is being played, and the capacity of player/*GM* to improvise within this.

disappearing. Underfoot the floor becomes irregular, the red clay sits in ranges, lines of sediment or subsurface veins. The blue light distorts depth and 7235 can't tell if their feet are sinking or if fatigue is pulling them downward.

#

In this light the agent feels like they are walking up the back of a huge and ancient hand, radiating veins and tendons which hold beneath the slipping skin, conceivably about to pull the ridge up onto fingertips and flex like an insect. The ground is definitely sloping, leading up towards the standing blocks and the strung tarps. The readout on the suit's forearm is crude, stating only that the outside is bad for a body and its organs. 7235 increases their speed and the blue pulse brightens. The enlivened work ethic of mild panic.

#

7235 is jogging across a field which is growing steeper, lifting them up. The ground feels swollen with fluid that never breaks the surface. There is no landmark to look back on as the turn in the gorge hides all the floodlights from here. There is just enough glow to the atmosphere to silhouette the standing formation ahead.

#

Now unable to stop, 7235 keeps on and their mind drifts under this rhythm.

#

They imagine the ice farmed from comets travelling across space and then stretched

Field Notes on Agents Part Two; The TTRPG Manual as collection of diagrams

This document (and a portion of the PhD Output as a whole) follows from a personal observation about a resonance between the processes in *TTRPGs* and an approach to art practice. This approach is one that sees both the production of art, and the point where it meets an audience as unstable, dynamic, and based in a negotiation with things outside of the artist's direct control. Firstly, this approach is one that does not seek to instil control over unstable dynamism and those exterior things, but attempts to articulate even the individual artist as engaged in a collaboration with various exteriors. These exteriors include such things as pre-existing systems and processes, plagiarized material, and methods of delivery. The collaboration with exteriors involves feedback loops, a kind of dynamism which is emphasised by the use of pre-existing systems/processes/material/methods in contexts and combinations other than those they were intended for. Secondly, this approach sees the points where the thing produced by the artist meets the audience as another site of collaborative production through dynamic instability. The approach welcomes audience agency as another variable which creatively, and destructively, modifies the artwork.

out around this ball of rock, forming the vast oceans of Diane. They see it fill with organisms, plants and tiny machines, all which repeatedly live and die and in turn give birth or rise to infection and mutation while always hopeful of escape. Walls hold them in, then are opened. Particles and waves through filters which dilate. Memories are held in the liquid, a mind getting more complex with neural pathways made of sea scum, of rare earth minerals, of familial relations and habits. Pulling back, 7235 imagines those comets in the Kuiper belt where this sea had been born, and those others which escaped beyond Neptune, a pulsing disk, an areola in space. No, maybe an eye. No, maybe a sore.

\#

The standing formation is now close, the jog becomes a sweating scramble with blue glowing limbs all reaching into the floor for purchase. Hands stretch the membrane and grab engorged cables through the skin. They are right under the tall stones now, for that is clearly what they are, whether calcified, petrified or ejected from a body. Pearls, gallstones, sacred bezoars. Still bearing the signifiers of shipping units but with grossly imprecise or utterly complex forms, the material is an amberish sebum, crystalline and alive with flaws and impurities, reflecting and refracting.

\#

7235 leans an aching arm against one standing stone where their touch cracks a surface bubble and then holds. They let their head drop toward their chest and knees

In an *TTRPG*, neither the process or outcome of a game is known by any party involved, or dictated by the rules established in the manuals. To use the terminology of philosopher Gilles Deleuze in "Logic of Sense" (Deleuze, 1990), the game is a number of "events" which modify "series" throughout the structure of rules, habits, history and participants. Philosopher James Williams explains that an "event" can be understood as the "introduction of change and difference" to a "continuing series of processes" (Williams, 2008, pp. 1–2). What is important for the current purposes is that an *Event* is "something that runs through a series but that is also transformed by it" (Williams, 2008, p. 2). According to Williams, the Deleuzian *Series* should not be thought of as "inert and passive receivers of an excitation" such as chain of marbles which when struck at one end transmit kinetic energy along their line (Williams, 2008, p. 2). Instead, the relation between *Event* and *Series* is better understood like an "emulsion where two substances that cannot be blended form a temporary novel mix while drawing energy from an external excitation" (Williams, 2008, p. 2).

One way that the approach to art practice I have developed over the course of this PhD can be understood is as trying to centre this relationship between *Events* and *Series*. One method employed is by taking parts of a structure from one area, *TTRPGs*, and laying it over another, art. This

bend while their sight rests on the hole which draws open at the centre of this stone circle.

#

7235 catches a flash of red light reflected through and across the stones as the children appear from all sides, herding the agent's unresisting body into the hole, watching as the blue light winked out within.

#

process is one I have referred to as "Diagrammatics", and draws from the work of Deleuze's work with psychoanalyst Félix Guattari on "diagrams" and "abstract machines";

> "We define the abstract machine as the aspect or moment at which nothing but functions and matters remain. A diagram has neither substance nor form, neither content nor expression.[40] Substance is a formed matter, and matter is a substance that is unformed either physically or semiotically. Whereas expression and content have distinct forms, are really distinct from each other, function has only "traits," of content and of expression, between which it establishes a connection: it is no longer even possible to tell whether it is a particle or a sign (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 141).

I employ my own approach to diagrams as "constellations of processes"[3] whilst also referring to the work of other artists and researchers who have furthered their work on the subject, most notable those involved in the "Diagram Research Use and Generation Group" (DRUGG) ('Plague of Diagrams', n.d.).

A working description for *Diagrammatics*, as employed in my research, would be as follows;

● A diagram is a system of modifying processes which make up a

Well done young bucko, you are the X-Pop sensation Si-5.

You are an unbelievably handsome ibix, your modified cognition implants are subject to a huge number of corporate gag orders and 3 ongoing lawsuits. There may well be someone out there who knows what's inside you, but it is not you. You are *very* handsome.

concept.

- Diagrammatics is the process of applying the diagram to something other than that which it was extracted from

There are a number of historical precedents for this process. A most simple example would be the artist Guy Debord's note that "A friend recently told me that he had just wandered through the Harz region of Germany while blindly following the directions of a map of London" (Debord, 2006, p. 11). The concept of using a map of London to navigate is the *Diagram*. The process of pushing the region of Harz through this *Diagram* is *Diagrammatics*.

Another historical precedent for this type of *Diagrammatics* is to be found in forms of divination. In the practice of "Cartomancy" a deck of cards originally produced for playing games, is redeployed as a device for reading the future. The concept "deck of playing cards" is the diagram, the process of *Diagrammatics* is in pushing "the desire to know the future" (or "the desire to convince another of a prediction of their future") through this *Diagram*.

The process of *Diagrammatics* is a dialectic one. The result comes from the struggle between the concept within the *Diagram* collapsing whilst modifying what it is applied to. This struggle results in the *Diagram* being

Ghost Crew [DIAGRAM, LACUNA]

altered because the process of pushing anything through it transforms it through this new context. On the other side, the process of *Diagrammatics* causes any number of abrasions, swellings, and folds. Some parts simply won't fit through, others expand when given space, and many are brought into new configurations.

Artist Dean Kenning describes this modifying through *Diagrams* in terms of "alienation" (Kenning, 2014). One's habits and narratives of familiarity are unpicked by the *Diagrammatic* process and the thing becomes strange and transformed, yet still undeniably the same thing.

The *Diagrammatic* function of alienation has a number of applications. In terms of art practice, it is a powerful tool to break the artist out from a limited set of paths of engagement with a thing based on experience with it, and things associated with comparable things. *Diagrammatics* perform what Deleuze and Guattari termed "Deterritorialization" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 3). The previous sense of a thing is broken open, and a new one put in its place. In this manner, *Diagrammatics* sits alongside such established techniques as musician Brian Eno's "Oblique Strategies" cards (Schneider, 2014), and artist Yoko Ono's "Grapefruit: a book of instructions and drawings" (Ono, 2000).

While writing this thesis I encountered the following post on social media platform Twitter. The post by user @Proton_31 consists of the statement, "Yoko Ono was making RPGs over a decade before D&D so this is more old school, the true old school" and images of four works from Grapefruit (@Proton_31, 2019). One of the works is "Conversation Piece" from 1962, the text follows in its entirety;

> "Bandage any part of your body. If people ask about it, make a story and tell. If people do not ask about it, draw their attention to it and tell. If people forget about it, remind them of it and keep telling. Do not talk about anything else. 1962 Summer" (Ono, 2000).

Ono's *Conversation Piece* is a *Diagram* which charts a system of modifying processes. *Diagrammatics* takes place as an outside context is pushed through the *Diagram*. This context includes the first social encounter after the work is begun. During this encounter, the *Diagram* restricts, expands, and folds a number of its aspects such as conversation, thought, affect, etc. Likewise the *Diagram* is itself modified as it changed from an instruction read and decided upon, to something experienced. The person performing *Conversation Piece* finds the *Diagram* changed as a result. This two fold transformation continues with each successive encounter. Perhaps the person performing becomes more skilled at extending the duration of the

THE MOST IMPORTANT ORGAN [CARE, DIAGRAM]

I will draw for you the diagram of the most important organ for your work. Time passes.

#

I start by modelling an approximation of your body out of sculpey. It is flattering in its pose, but its dimensions are accurate. You are dressed in the coverall of the party. I go a little overboard with the base which is not only flocked and sprinkled with delicately dry brushed polystyrene boulders, but features a scantily clad snottling clutching your calf and looking up at you with fear and adoration. You look onward toward some unseen horizon.

#

After finishing the highlights, particularly your cheekbones, the area of your chest and stomach exposed by the open buttons of your coverall, and the metallic holo colour I have taken the liberty of rendering your hair in I begin to draw the actual organ. Taking the hand-wand from the 3d printer, I begin to draw lines which can hold their position in space supported only by the first point of contact with your body, which is where the organ begins, under your lowest left rib. I explain what I am drawing (because that is how these diagrams work) as I draw it.

#

social encounter and in doing so has transformed the *Diagram*, increasing the power of one area (duration of conversation) relative to others. Perhaps the person performing becomes interested in something right on the periphery of the work, the moment when the other person in the social encounter demonstrates they are aware of the performer's bandage, but has not yet spoken to this awareness. In this example, the *Diagram* could remain the same, but with a significantly reconfigured emphasis:

● The performer experiments with bandage placement, considering social codes and levels of visibility through clothing equally considered.

● The performer experiments with techniques of speech, body language which might maintain another person's awareness of the bandage but without allowing them to go as far as to speak about it.

● The performer experiments with location and time of encounter, the kind of person that could potentially stay in this uneasy social space indefinitely, and reconsidered all of the above tactics, tuning them toward this one target.

The *Diagram* is as plastic as any context which could be pushed through it. It can be repaired to an approximation of its previous configuration, but it will

"You need to imagine that you are in an ocean and you are swimming. You have always been swimming, you have no frame of reference outside of swimming. It is always night time."

#

"Inside of you, between your liver and your stomach is a small ball, about the size of a golf ball"

#

"From this ball I want you to imagine strands radiating. Now these strands branch and curl like Spanish Moss."

#

"These strands sense something which you cannot see, or smell, or sense with another organ. The layer of the world which this particular organ I am drawing accesses is one that is not perceptible without it, but one it is perceived you will see its shape with all of your other senses"

#

"Excuse me, I need to now play some music while I continue to the next stage of this diagram"

#

On the floor next to my table and its covering of pots of acrylic paint, empty pill packets and bloody feathers is an old sea chest covered in elaborate carvings. I open

always retain the trace of every other it has taken.

The Twitter user's observation that with *Grapefruit* Ono was "making RPGs" (@Proton_31, 2019) highlights another reason why this PhD Output takes the *Diagram* of *TTRPGs* and pushes art through it. *Tabletop Role Playing Games* are themselves collections of *Diagrams* through which things are pushed. These *Diagrams* operate at different levels which overlap. Towards the smaller scale an object to be used by players of *NPC* functions in this way.

Here is an example for the *5E Player Handbook*, "Ram, portable 4 gp 35 lb" (Crawford et al., 2014, p. 150). The portable battering ram, a tool for opening doors, has some properties set by the manual. It has a value attributed to it in in-game currency of 4 gold pieces, and a weight of 35 pounds. This sets up a range of potential ways it could shape the decisions of a player, as well as well as implying limits as to whether a character might be able to physically lift it, or financially afford it. However, most of the shape of the *Diagram* of the portable ram will be established, and then continually modified by the players and the *GM*. For example, a situation might arise in the game where the *GM* decides that the size of the ram (a detail not specified in the manual) will potentially draw unwanted attention to the character carrying it, opening up potential pathways for development

this now, and reaching inside press a button which starts a song playing from inside.

#

The song is of a woman singing accompanied by an electric guitar and a small drum kit. It sounds like it as recorded live as when it begins you hear the sounds of an audience talking and drinking. The song plays and you feel a tension around your stomach which grows as the music continues. The woman sings "'Let's kidnap each other, And start singing our song" and the feeling is overwhelming.

#

You wake up on the sofa of an unfamiliar house. The TV is on. It's a 1970s road movie that has been digitized, data-moshed, re-edited and supplemented with deep fakes all dictated by algorithm. This is all TV though, and this particular movie's genealogy likely involves not just multiple original films and TV shows and video game cutscenes but also multiple recent recombined and rebuilt versions of these. This is all TV.

#

The TV shows a school shooting run in reverse over which is superimposed an explosion of flowers with each petal cutting a wet trace through the image underneath.

#

You feel nauseous. The TV algorithm senses your disconnect and stabs around

of play as well as reconfiguring the player's focus on their character. The *Diagram* of *Portable Ram* has expanded and made more complex a number of attributes of the character which might have previously been unseen, most notably how conspicuous they are and decision making connected to this property. The *Diagram* of *Portable Ram* could continue to be modified through feedback loops of decisions between players, *GM*, established properties of the object, and mechanics within the game. In the previous example the *GM* states that if the character enters a crowded inn carrying the ram they will draw attention to themselves. The player role playing the character might respond that they will use a combination of their character's skills and background experience, along with some other handy materials, and disguise the *Portable Ram* as something less conspicuous such as a barrel of beer. If the *GM* agrees to this, it could open up a number of new foci such as the whether the character has the skills to perform this deception and whether the *GM* decides an *Ability Check* is needed, whether carrying a barrel of beer into an inn raises a different kind of attention, whether the character has the interpersonal skills to explain it away and so on and so on. The *Diagram* of *Portable Ram* continues to modify the context of the game, while being modified by it.

On a slightly larger scale, the *Diagram* of the *Portable Ram* is overlapped by numerous others which come into focus or fade away as the game

in the dark like a drunk trying to find something that will connect with you. The screen stutters through images. A pair of severed hands modelling knitted gloves. A round table duck race. A church roof fundraising thermometer that becomes a dog's penis. But it's too late, your attention is gone, you get up and after a panic strobe of abstract pornography the TV reluctantly turns itself on to standby and waits for your return.

#

You wheel yourself to the closed blinds and poke a finger through to look at what is outside. Under street lights is a road devoid of life that could more or less be on any landmass at any time since the mid 20th century.

#

You are clearly here waiting for something. You hope you will have either remembered what it is by the time it happens, or it is sufficiently pronounced that you will both spot it and instinctively know how to respond.

#

At this point you notice that the light under the door shining in from the hallway has just been blocked out, and that someone is standing directly outside.

#

The song playing from the old sea chest covered in elaborate carvings ends, and with it does the hallucination or day dream or shift of attention or whatever you

continues but nevertheless have the capacity to compress, expand, and fold. The game *Event* "the character enters the inn" is a *Diagram*, and the context, including the fact that the character is carrying a *Portable Ram*, is what is pushed through it. Here the shape of that *Diagram*, with its pathways connected in *Series* to the suspicion of other patrons have expanded attributes of the *Portable Ram* which are not accounted for in the manual, namely its size, bulk, and the response from other characters to it being brought into this place.

The manner in which *Diagrams* overlap and are modified by other Diagrams is articulated by philosopher Brian Massumi in "A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari" (Massumi, 1992). As is implied by the word "Deviations" in the title, and in the introduction which states that "The drift is as much away from the "originals" as toward them" (Massumi, 1992, p. 8). Therefore Massumi's use of concepts is not interchangeable with that of Deleuze and Guattari, either in collaboration or in their individual works. I am drawing attention to this because Massumi, in creating "deviations" is responding to the provocation of Deleuze and Guattari's "A Thousand Plateaus" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) which he sees as its invitation to the reader to "lift dynamism out of the book and incarnate it in a foreign medium, whether painting or politics" (Massumi, 1992, p. 8). Massumi emphasises the this idea with the following;

want to call it.

#

"Excuse me" I say again. You have missed some of my explanation of the diagram which represents the most important organ for your work. You see that a complex spray of lines has been drawn with the printer filament, exploding out from the body of the figure of you and it's adoring Snottling leg-maiden.

#

While your mind was somewhere else, I have added various other elements to demonstrate how this organ is not something which functions in isolation, but is contingent upon outside materials and event, which in turn have a relationship which is independent of you. The diorama now includes a crude though extensive animatronic section where a vast number of dogs are sleeping in various improvised structures on a tiny Greek Island.

#

It's remarkable that with only a small number of Arduino boards I have created a system which feeds back as the dogs shift through levels of sleep, their breathing, snoring, and sleep-woofs, causing their neighbours to rise up closer to consciousness but never quite waking before then in turn sink lower and twitching in brown, and speckled thigh muscles and flexing hock joints.

#

"[Deleuze] calls his kind of philosophy "Pragmatics" because its goal is the invention of concepts that do not add up to a system of belief or an architecture of propositions that can either enter into or don't, but instead pack a potential in the way a crowbar in a willing hand envelops an energy of prying" (Massumi, 1992, p. 8).

Massumi's book takes Deleuze and Guattari's model of the tool kit made up of parts stolen and which in turn is offered for future theft, and builds a deviated tool kit which expands, contracts, and fold the former.

This PhD Output draws from Deleuze and Guattari's "A Thousand Plateaus" and from Massumi "A User's Guide" in a number of ways. Of importance to this document though, is the manner in which both of those books present a tool kit of concepts to be stolen and modified. A *TTRPG* manual also has the potential[4] to be such a tool kit, whilst also offering insight into an approach to art practice which is concerned with the modulation of self though systems which emerge and mutate.

You watch this murmuration rippled across the robotic animals and your eyes follow how, although the patterns are on the periphery of predictability as far as your brain is concerned, it is hard to tell where the dogs begin and those Spanish Moss-like printer filament lines end.

#

There are other areas of the diagram now, but they themselves are describable only in metaphor. One area is populated exclusively with rodent musk, another is best described as the moment when all parties playing an online multiplayer first person shooter decide against the overwhelming authority of the game, their habit forming experience, and multiple language barriers, to do something with their 3 minutes together other than shooting one another in an act of zero sum serotonin robbery, and create something on the edge of the game's limits.

#

I place the printing wand back on the table.

#

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Remember who you are.

The shuttle takes off again behind you leaving on standing on a huge expanse of green, interrupted at regular intervals with yellow-brown spikes pointing straight up to points high above you. These spikes are altered with functional intent. The ones nearest you support various buildings raised up into the air and covered in lights and traffic sensors.

Think carefully and turn to page 54 of Ahuman Use

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Dog Stand 2 [CARE, DIAGRAM]

Field Notes on Agents; Endnotes

1. The example of a drug is used here because it demonstrates how Mechanics can involve a player attempting to perform an action for one purpose while negotiating the possibility it will also perform an additional action which is outside of their control. For example the manual for the *TTRPG* "Cyberpunk" lists a number of drugs such as "Boost" which increases a characters Intelligence attribute for duration dictated by a dice roll (Pondsmith et al., 1993). In addition the drug also has value which determines the probability of addiction and tolerance, meaning the character must have "more Boost within twelve hours or be reduced to screaming fits and hallucinations" (Pondsmith et al., 1993, p. 122).

2. Dungeons and Dragons also includes a large number of other books which expand the system and world, however these three are the "core" requirements to play the game and are marketed as such (Mearls, Crawford, Perkins, & Wyatt, 2018).

3. My approach to the use of diagrams should only be thought of as a departure from Deleuze and Guattari's rather than a reflection of their concepts.

Your diary chip beeps and you remember someone who is meant to pick you up as you become aware how utterly empty this place is under the flood lights. There is nothing nearby but the terminal building. Modern political attitudes have rendered security checkpoints obsolete and now the building seems to be home some light manufacturing facilities, as well as what's left of the food, drink, and pharmaceutical concessions.

You see a vehicle approaching:

4. The word "potential" needs to do a lot of heavy lifting because there is a tension within any *TTRPG* manual between its provocation for reader-player to adhere to the structure it sets out and it's provocation to improvise, to bend, and to potentially depart from this structure. Not all *TTRPGs* adhere to the same philosophy in regards this tension. Some lean heavily towards anticipating where play might lead and having detailed rules to definitively resolve the question of how something need to be done, as well as focusing on probability to use definitive dice rolls instead of speculation. A good example of this philosophy is the *TTRPG* "Eastman and Laird's Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Other Strangeness" (ELTMNT) (Wujcik, 1987, 1990). In place of many decisions which could be made by a group playing the game, or even an individual player, the manual provides for these to be made by dice role. An example is the section which deals with randomised character generation.

Characters in *ELTMJT's* science fiction setting are primarily animal-human hybrids and through a series of dice rolls a player can be allocated a species from around a hundred animals, with different statistical weighting depending on rarity in the game world. The player then uses further dice rolls to establish the cause of the mutation and where the character presents on a continuum between "entirely human appearing" and "entirely animal

appearing". It should be stressed that most *TTRPG* manuals, *ELTMNT* included, do not insist that such systems always be used over player choice, group consensus and role play. Within the cultural history of *TTRPGs* there is what is referred to as "rule zero"('Rule Zero', n.d.). *Rule Zero* holds that before any other rules, the first priority is that the game be fun and that players should be free to deviate from the rules to ensure this. Or as worded in the first edition of "Advanced Dungeons & Dragons",

> "This game is unlike chess in that the rules are not cut and dried. In many places they are guidelines and suggested methods only" (Gygax, 1978, p. 8).

However, the presence of random character generation systems, or detailed statistical breakdowns of objects encourage or at least provide the opportunity for rules which are more fixed.

In contrast, some rule-sets lean away from this and fashion a game from the bare minimum of material. Some game designers have explored the potential of the "one page RPG" who's rules fit on a single side of A4. A popular example of a *One Page RPG* is writer and game designer Grant Howitt's "Honey Heist", "A game in which you play a criminal bear with two stats: CRIMINAL and BEAR" (Howitt, n.d.). *Honey Heist* sets the context

Then there is a smell of garlic and your ears pop but its your veins where you feel it and then you realise you could see this whole time and also hear and smell and everyone in the circle of people is looking at you.

that you are a group of criminal bears attempting to execute a huge and complex theft of honey from "Honeycon 2017".

Each player's character has a "bear type", "role" and "descriptor" (a single adjective which implies character and backstory) assigned by dice roll. Character's each begin with stats "bear" and "criminal" set at 3 each, when an outcome of an action is uncertain a player rolls a die and it passes if the result is equal to or less than the relevant stat. The manual ascribes the "bear stat" to be used whenever the player wishes their character to attempt something which could be considered "bear stuff" and the "criminal" stat to be used for "anything not directly related to being a bear".

The game has one last two part *Mechanic* whereby the character's "bear" and "criminal" stats can shift. If part of the characters plan fails, the "frustration" *Mechanic* moves a point from their "criminal" stat and adds it to their "bear" stat. If the character's plan succeeds the "greed" mechanic moves a point from "bear" to "criminal". If either the bear or criminal stat reaches a value of 6, the character either returns to the wild or leaves for a life of crime, respectively and the game ends.

The balancing act between becoming too bear, or too criminal is also a useful metaphor for the balance between structure and collapse which the

user of a *TTRPG* manual to inform art practice must perform. The character generation system based entirely on rice rolls has value, but following it rigidly is less a collaboration than deferring to another authority, even if it is an authority we as artist chose to follow. On the other hand, there needs to be enough structure or process to act as provocation, whether through stimulation of resistance.

The place where this balance takes place is where art practice is best understood as *play.*

Under years of sugar deposits from the herds of bull aphids which occasionally migrate across this world befouling everything their path, you can discern two signs:

"Fast-way travel-belt to Alpha Alpha Niner Twenty"

and

"Drugs"

Will you decide to ride the old travel system to the main hub and turn to page 61 of Unknown Lacuna?

Or are you are interested in the other thing turn to page 40 of Ahuman Desire?

Smeared into The Environment [CARE, MANSION, RPG]

This document approaches a contemporary aspect of horror read through

contemporary philosophy. This isn't to say that either the horror or the

philosophy did not exist before the contemporary moment, but that

something about current trends in the use of "horror" in contemporary art

practice will hopefully be made clear.

The work being examined is by Porpentine Charity Heartscape, who's

biography lists her as;

> "a writer, game designer, and dead swamp milf in Oakland. Her
> work includes xenofemme scifi/fantasy, cursed videogames,
> and globe-spanning sentient slime molds" (Heartscape, n.d.).

The particular work now addressed is one of Heartscape's collaborations

with the artist, game designer and musician Ada Rook (Geffen, 2018). "No

World Dreamers: Sticky Zeitgeist Episode 1, Hyperslime" (Hyperslime)

is the first in a series of self produced, episodic video games made by

the artists (Heartscape & Rook, 2017). My analysis of this artwork will

be done through the philosophical tools of post-human feminism, and in

particular those of philosopher Patricia MacCormack as presented in the book chapter "Lovecraft's Cosmic Ethics" (MacCormack, 2016). It is in this chapter that MacCormack proposes to;

> "not ask what his stories mean but how we can use them today, perhaps for unique purposes, to imagine becoming the horrors he evokes toward a vitalistic, activist, and wondrous celebration of otherness, manifested in a variety of ways, from ethics to erotics, and literature to philosophy" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 200).

Lovecraft's supposed "aversion to the carnal" combined with his stories frequent encounters with overwhelming, fleshy, or cosmic immanence allows them to be brought into the unlikely company of philosopher Luce Irigaray (MacCormack, 2016, p. 207). MacCormack asks not for a revision, but a *use* of Lovecraft, queering his writing into an "ethical erotics of alterity" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 209). While being *Used* in this way, Lovecraft's writing remains within the sphere of "horror", though this sphere becomes more heterogeneous, allowing for it to be engaged with not through dread but euphoria. Such a reading of Lovecraft has precedent in the work of philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari who see within his work a "becoming animal", which is to say breaking open the concept of human into a "becomings-elementary, -cellular, -molecular, and even Becomings-imperceptible" (Deleuze &

You wander through dusty corridors which were once flanked by concessions for duty free firmware and liminal porno.

Kiosks have long since been knocked through neighbouring booths and wet rooms and sealed into the space for the kind of manufacturing which can only exist in legal ambiguity of the terminal on a diplomatic hub, the status of which will remain in the purview of hundreds of unresolvable legal struggles which are designed to not end before this sector's sun burns out in the far future, turn to page 66 of Unknown Lacuna

Guattari, 1987, p. 248). Cultural theorist Timothy Laurie offers a succinct

explanation of *becoming* as;

> "[A] way of thinking through changes that modify multiple
> bodies (organic and non-organic) at once, without conforming
> to pregiven structures of identification, representation,
> resemblance or contradiction" (Laurie, 2015, p. 154)

What Deleuze and Guattari celebrate here is the replacing of a singular,

defined self with an openness to the "anomalous [...] a phenomenon

of bordering", or as they borrow Lovecraft's own words, the ""Outsider"

[...] this thing or entity, the Thing, which arrives and passes at the edge"

(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 245).

In the words of Lovecraft's Carter "to be aware of existence and yet

to know that one is no longer a definite being distinguished from other

beings" (Lovecraft & Price, 2008b, p. 902). If *becoming* animal, merging

and re-configuring other forms of being, kinship and sensation are not

pushed back in phobic disgust, the question must be asked "horror for

whom?" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 209).

The word "horror" itself becomes slippery under these conditions. I use it

to refer to the genre, signifiers, and indeed some of the sensations felt by

agents within such narratives, as well as those of the audience observing them. However the thing that I bracket out from horror is any assumption of the primacy of order, and the subject as *Man,* the "majoritarian human" distinct from "the various failures to be so, from woman and nonwhite human through to animal, vegetable, and so forth" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 202).

It is my proposal that *Hyperslime* represents a similar horror which denies the human, and displays the same difference-celebrating, erotic possibilities which MacCormack pulls from Lovecraft. I argue that *Hyperslime* is horror, but horror where the majoritarian subject, the one who should be horrified, is absent. It is not a reversal which centres what might otherwise be the antagonist, positioning them in the same structure against the *Majoritarian* male subject. Rather, *Hyperslime* abandons those structures, and forges its own.

Firstly I will establish some of the key concepts used by MacCormack and then trace them through the world of *Hyperslime*. The first of these is the "Ahuman", and while this term has many applications I will start from its position as a theory;

"Ahuman theory promotes catalysing becoming-other from the
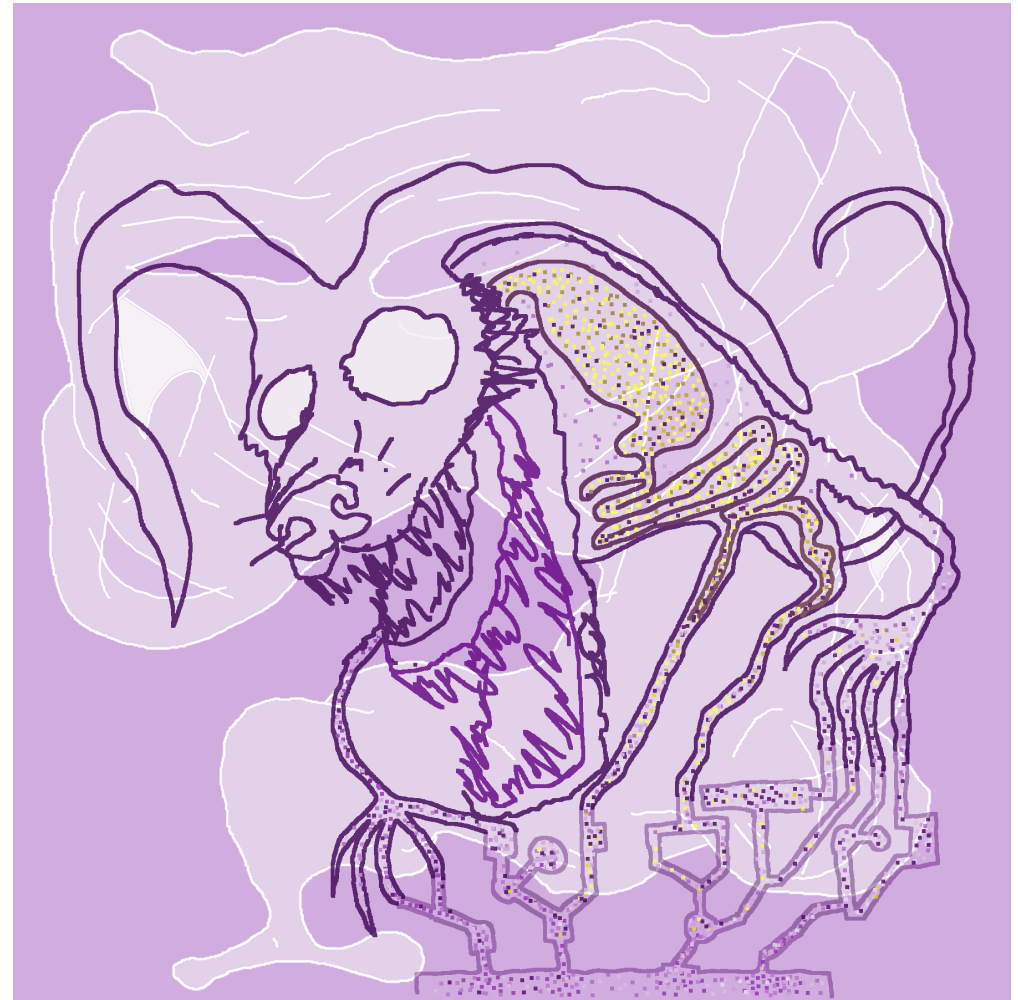
Diagram of The Formless Wastes [DIAGRAM, RPG]

majoritarian or all human privilege and renouncing the benefits of the Anthropocene. [Methods for which include] the use of all manifestations of art to form new terrains of apprehension of the world and encourage new ethical relations between entities" (MacCormack, 2018, p. 21).

In this definition, the Ahuman is positioned across radical animal rights

discourse of abolitionism and a theory of the post-human whilst replacing

"the (now defunct myth of the) human" from which they would otherwise

be orientated and doomed to repeat (MacCormack, 2018, p. 20).

Rather than bringing the non-human into the human ethical sphere, which

MacCormack considers both impossible and its attempts necessarily

non-consensual, the abolitionist position bases non-human rights upon

the fact "that it is" rather than "what it is" (MacCormack, 2018, p. 20).

More importantly for the subject of this document MacCormack's *Ahuman*

Theory argues against defining animal rights (as this is also to define the

animal from an asymmetric power relation in order to justify exploitation)

and for;

"[A]cknowledging communication is fatally human, so we can never know modes of nonhuman communication and to do so is both hubris and materially detrimental to nonhumans" (MacCormack, 2018, p. 20).

This is perhaps the most crucial aspect of the *Ahuman* for this document's purposes. Difference is to exist on its own terms, and the capturing action of communication is not required to acknowledge this difference.

Hyperslime begins with a flurry of difference, including characters which present as *failures to be human*, without every having their alterity defined. Similarly, communication is presented as an unreliable and withholding process. Following the opening theme song, *Hyperslime* is epigraphed with a quote;

> "Make a 150-lb self-contained, 3-D person into a square-mile
> thin pancake and you've got a slimy veneer of organic matter
> of no use to you or the observer puzzled by the thin, gooey-
> drip man. Suburbias [*sic*] and exurbias [*sic*] are promoters of
> slime" (Heartscape & Rook, 2017).

This quote is attributed to Italian architect Paolo Soleri who's concept of low-waste, high population density, self sufficient vertical urban structures which he named *Arcology* appears throughout this narrative[1]. Our story's first protagonist "Ever", considers the quote and posits that they themselves are even further dispersed, and that trapped in their bedroom engaged on with a computer screen they are "Hyperslime". *Ever's*

response to this realisation is to get high, masturbate and surf the internet,

something which is itself one action as under the glow of her network

terminal *Ever* pokes the drug "girl chunks" into their arsehole. *Ever*

comments on the impossibility of describing this drug-data-sex experience;

> "[I]f i wasn't experiencing this, i [*sic*] couldn't describe it and i
> [*sic*] can't remember when i'm [*sic*] not experiencing it what i'm
> [*sic*] not experiencing hypersucrose on my frontal lobe like-"
> (Heartscape & Rook, 2017).

Before she is interrupted by a call from work.

The impossibility of language has already been brought up in the human's

relation to the nonhuman. It also surfaces repeatedly in MacCormack's

discussion of *Ahumanity* and Lovecraft's horror where we are shown

"what is possible, while managing to show that it is also unnameable"

(MacCormack, 2016, p. 212). For MacCormack human language is

the "great annihilator of the potentialization of expressivity and affect of

entities that are not counted by the majoritarian human" (MacCormack,

2016, p. 213), but in the world of Lovecraft such language is demonstrably

powerless. Encounters are beyond description, are left (un)recounted as

such. The ethical turn which is executed upon Lovecraft demonstrates the

inadequacy of the word "horror" to account for such experience. "Horror

for some, the very opening of the world to others" (MacCormack, 2016, p.

213). Or as articulated by Lovecraft himself, "Fright became pure awe, and what had seemed blasphemously abnormal now only ineffably majestic" (Lovecraft & Price, 2008b, p. 904).

Returning to *Hyperslime*, *Ever's* collapsing of self, sex and connection becomes a state of ecstasy. The message demanding that she travels to work is a brutal interrupting which brings with it structures of time, language and power all exterior to *Ever* which are relentless, unresponsive, and violently overwhelming. The world outside her room (which she describes as the "Goblin's pit" (Heartscape & Rook, 2017)) is loaded with signs, both literally in the form of adverts for jobs, bands and lost fast food establishments, as well as the rigid structures of time, behaviour, social relations they indicate. *Ever's* chance to pass invisibly into order relies on her getting her bus to work while in constant fear of the drugs and saliva leaking from her underwear. The bus is late, she is going to be late, and she falls into a panic attack. The panic attack itself is represented as the game descends into a gross, nonsense parody of the call and response rhythm game "PaRappa the Rapper" (Matsuura, 1996). *Hyperslime* snaps to a different visual language showing the snap in *Ever's* state of mind, but also leaving the articulation of this as an absence of meaning. "You snooze, you oooze! Then you lose! Control of your holes!" the game shouts at us (Heartscape & Rook, 2017). Mucus, holes,

"She is?"

"Yes. Even just deciding that society as a whole can be represented by a set of individuals is a political move decision. But the manner in which you choose to distil the social is entirely subjective.

Would you fill your Ark with two of every species? Would you follow Karl Marx and choose from the class categories of an athlete, a brain, a basketcase, a princess, and a criminal?

And once you have made that broad mesh, how would you define each of the individual categories? How could you be sure you have set a bias toward face-tanking and underrepresented healers and DPS? No, the analyst that tries to do this betrays that they have an ideological imprint of society and wish to summon it into being through the microcosmic effigy of a group of sick individuals.

No, archetype theory is for boy bands and to be treated with cautious suspicion"

and a failure of meaning leaves this event with no simple explanation such as humiliation or even pleasure. It is an excess.

The *Abject* which philosopher Julia Kristeva describes as "the place where meaning collapses" is not simply the girl chunks leaking from *Ever*, but also *Ever* herself (Kristeva, 1982, p. 2). When she first sets out on this trip to work she narrates "i [*sic*] exit from the back of the house like shit" (Heartscape & Rook, 2017). *Ever* is the remainder and excess who themselves cannot either hold the outside in or keep it out but is in a constant *Asignified* flow which becomes impossible and traumatic only within the unaccommodating and regimented parts of the world.

As we continue to play the game focused initially on the narrative of *Ever*, more signs of horror perpetuate. The first of these is the user interface that frames the game space, cables and viscera weave into one another frame a screen and text/hyper-link area bringing to mind the 90s point and click horror adventure "Dark Seed" with graphics by H.R. Geiger (Cranford & Dawson, 1992). At the top, a ribbon cable is plugged in through a smashed secondary screen or logo area, leaving only a few letters of the game's title readable. In *Hyperslime*, as in much of Heartscape's other work[2], trash pervades. Everything is a remainder, including characters. Everything is an improvised hack, survival mixed with abandonment and

most importantly not fully nameable. This also extends to the characters themselves, *Ever* is only described as a girl, her ears and nose suggest a dog or maybe a goat. It's implied that she is trans*[3], but *Hyperslime* offers no exposition on her identity. Other characters display equal fluidity, maybe becoming-robots, maybe becoming-moths. Gender is explicit though, all are referred to with female pronouns. They are "she", "her" and "sisters".

MacCormack notes that the remainder as understood as *in-excess-of* or *less-than* a given *name* or *category* runs through Lovecraftian horror (MacCormack, 2016, p. 211). The folks of Innsmouth with their "sides of their necks all shriveled and creased up" (Lovecraft, 2008a, p. 811), the mercurial Old Ones for whose "abysms of shrieking and immemorial lunacy" there is no language (Lovecraft, 2008, p. 377) or various landscapes and objects and experiences which litter the stories. MacCormack quotes Irigaray;

> ""Already constructed theoretical language does not speak of the mucous. The mucous remains a remainder, producer of delirium, of dereliction, of wounds, sometimes of exhaustion" (Irigaray, To Speak, 244)" (MacCormack, 2016, p. 211).

This connectivity, abjection, transgression is the stuff of horror, but it is

also the stuff of erotics and kinship. The affects of proximity with another

where language is exceeded or inadequate. The two robot sisters in

Hyperslime sit together on a train, one, "Agate" leaning against the other

who narrates;

> "She's in sleep mode. She spends most of her time there. Our
> brains make a lot of connections at super fast high frequency.
> Hard to shut out the bad connections. Everything reminds
> you of something else. Contaminated with information"
> (Heartscape & Rook, 2017).

Their default state is porosity, leaky bodies. The characters in *Hyperslime*

are barely defined and what they hold in common is their openness to

the exterior, to the outside, and to block it out is an act of agency. *Agate*

blocks out the connection of thought and meaning but retains that of

touch to be in contact with her sister as a reparative act. Later *Agate* will

visit a convenience store and watch the rotating "honk dogs", remarking

"how nice to be rotated", an empathetic encounter with convenience food

(Heartscape & Rook, 2017). The characters in *Hyperslime* are non-human,

but they are not fixed as one kind of non-human. Any encounter for them

is a *becoming* as their "Anomalous" border is open to the affective charges

of what they encounter (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 249).

As the player of the game we are often unsure who "we" are. The first

person narrative flickers between characters often without indication of who is speaking. We have to assume that we are all of the "pack" which the characters make up, while they "continually transform themselves into each other, cross over into each other" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 249). The pack is constantly in flux, and is "defined not by its elements, nor by a centre of unification or comprehension. It is defined by the number of dimensions it has" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 249), animal-girl drug euphoria dimensions, robot-sister overwhelming empathy dimensions.

What stands out in *Hyperslime* is while its narrative context is one of post-apocalyptic survival, the four characters are not presented as an isolationist group against the rest of the world. The game also presents their transition from total strangers to friends as a seamless non-event. It is as if they were so open and porous that there is no other way it could be. The character's job is to travel out into a swamp and salvage broken parts of downed satellites and one character comments "I like to rub my face on the debris to make sure the radiation is getting the most direct access to my brain" (Heartscape & Rook, 2017). The group is open and loving with one another in their fluidity while also being open to difference in the world around them, to be changed by it through drugs, radioactivity, touch or the beautiful leaky swamp they eventually head out into.

In 2012's "Posthuman Ethics: Embodiment and Cultural Theory" MacCormack states that "The art encounter elucidates the new horror and wonder of being in the asignifed world as a new state of constant ecstasy" (MacCormack, 2012, p. 51). Engaging with art including, or perhaps especially, with horror, is not simply about representing alterity but an affective encounter which breaks open the category of human. This is the argument MacCormack makes for the ecstatic experiences of the characters in Lovecraft's works, as well as the readers experience of these works of art. As we find ourselves adrift in asignification we are becoming *Ahuman*.

I propose that while MacCormack presents a way in which Lovecraft's work can be *Used* to explore a different ethical position, *Hyperslime* presents an ethical plurality on its own. *Hyperslime* can also be engaged with as a kind of *horror which is not*. Bodily, cognitive and social difference, are not presented as needing hygienic eradication but simply are. The primary process by which these characters deal with each other and themselves if through care and love. Characters might experience violent trauma and live in a world of unpredictable trash but there is neither a call for order, nor dialectic refusal of order. What is valuable about this kind of horror, is how it neither exorcises difference nor pulls it to the ethics of the human. MacCormack states that "The ethics of the art-encounter

shows *Becoming-Ahuman* is viable and necessary for new ways of thinking alterity in the realities of life for oppressed (sub) human subjects" (MacCormack, 2012, p. 51). *Hyperslime* does exactly this, a queering of horror to remove the human entirely.

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Smeared into The Environment; Endnotes

1. [KEYWORD: MANSION]

2. "Most of Heartscape's fiction features "trash women" and "slime girls" messily living and dying in a gooey, trashy future. Clearly, trash is a central motif in her work. Heartscape's reasoning: Although it is disposable, it's also stubbornly irrepressible. And the trash motif extends to her personal life as well. Heartscape describes herself as "trashgender" rather than transgender, and "trashbrained" rather than traumatized, as a way to push back against the static and reductive generalizations haunting those terms" (Kazimarki, 2016).

3. Throughout this document I use the term "trans*" which includes transgender as well as non-binary, genderqueer and other identities. It is an open term which is especially useful when considering individuals whose gender identity is only articulated as not being cisgendered. As theorist Susan Stryker states *Trans** is "a way of pointing to a somewhat related class of phenomena without having to articulate exactly what that is" (Steinmetz, 2018)

Loss [DIAGRAM, LACUNA]

The Use of Horror in Art Practice [DIAGRAM, LACUNA]

INT. CAVE

THE AGENT, WEARING A BEARSKIN AND WITH HANDS AND MOUTH STAINED WITH BLOOD AND GORE IS SLEEPING ON A PILE OF STRAW NEXT TO A SMALL OPEN FIRE ON SOME LARGE SLABS OF STONE. WIND AND WAVES CAN BE HEARD OUTSIDE AND THE FIRE FLICKERS WHILE CASTING LONG SHADOWS UP THE DAMP BLACK STONE WALLS NEAR US WHILE THE REAR OF THE CAVE IS COMPLETELY DARK. THE AGENT'S EYES OPEN, BUT REMAIN STILL AS THEY BEGIN TO SPEAK.

                    AGENT
                  (Tired)
      We need to undertake some field training. We
      talk about horror frequently in our work,
      but there is room to bring more rigour to
      this understanding of what horror is, and
      why it is of use. We will begin with an
      illustration.

From the rear of the cave comes a squealing, rattling sound. An assistant obscured by the darkness wheels a large television monitor and video player on an AV

trolley up onto the raised slaps, and into view next to

the fire. They insert a video cassette and the television

turns on and begins to play a film in the middle of a

scene.

                                            CUT TO:VIDEO

Two men wearing military uniforms of the early Chinese

Republic are running through a nineteenth century Chinese

prison. The men are chased by a ghoulish figure wearing

ragged and bloody seventeenth century traditional Chinese

dress, with long talons, deathly white skins, and trails

of blood from their eyes and mouth. The ghoul corners

the two men with their backs to an iron gate. Just

as the ghoul is about to reach them they each take a

deep breath, covering their noses and mouths with their

hands. The ghoul stops, as if no longer able to see the

men if they do not breath. With talons raised and just

inches from the trapped men, the ghoul's empty gaze pans

across the men. The men show increasing discomfort from

holding their breath, their faces turn red and the sound

of a heartbeat fades in and increases in volume. The

ghoul's gaze is fixed on one man who is sweating with the

effort of not taking a breath and the heartbeat speeds up

rapidly. The man's eyes bulge and swivel and just when

it seems he must take a breath he pinches the armpit of

the other man who screams in pain and is then pounced on

by the ghoul.

                                        CUT TO:CAVE

The assistant stops the video and turns off the television.

The agent, still lying down, begins to speak again.

                    AGENT
          This training is concerned with a series of
          propositions which are as follows.

          One: The   genre   of   horror   can   inform
          approaches to art practice that are concerned
          with something other than signification and
          representation.

          Two: Horror frequently presents situations
          in which meaning, law, and language collapse.
          This is as true for the characters on screen
          as it is for the audience.

          Three: The   inability   to   fully   account
          through language is a property of not only
          art viewing, but the cycles of <u>viewing and
          making</u> in art practice.

(to assistant)
        Play the next example.

The assistant inserts a new video into the video player.

The television turns on showing the words "New World

Pictures".

                                    CUT TO:VIDEO

A naked man is sitting on the floor of a room in complete

darkness save for 20 lit candles in a square formation

around him. He is sweating and holding a small metal cube

between his knees and is looking at it intensely. There

is a disturbing soundtrack of synthesiser music, the man

arches his head back and we see the floorboards shake and

rise up with steam from beneath. A figure appears in the

darkness and removes a veil from their head revealing

and unnaturally angular silhouette. Another figure rises

and we see they are dressed in black leather clothing

and have pins protruding from the skin of their face

and head. The naked man lifts his head up and screams.

A series of people look on in terror at something we

cannot see. A bloody bone rises out of a shallow puddle of blood as if it is emerging from the floor itself. A woman screams, and a half-formed body crawls across the floor. A figure dressed in black ascends a wooden staircase dragging a hook along the wall as they do so, leaving a gash in the paint which drips blood.

CUT TO:CAVE

The assistant pauses the video, leaving the last image juddering and flickering on the television screen. The agent has still not moved.

                    AGENT
        The horror genre primarily presents the
        anxieties of the dominant power, and assumed
        viewing subject, and as such demonstrates
        what Fredric Jameson referred to as the
        "Political Unconscious" (Jameson, 2007).

        Extracted from the presumptions of dominant
        power and its assumed subject, horror can
        inform art practice in general. To detach a
        horror film from the politics it intentionally
        and unintentionally embodies is sometimes
        easier said than done. However the agency
        recommends tactics of abstraction and removal
        from context.

and zap.

Everything goes curved space and then dry swallow ping pong and then all black, turn to

Elements from a film, whether scenes, score, thematics, dialogue, characters, or camera technique, can be pulled from the film. Once removed, these elements can be rearranged, or remade, or otherwise degraded. This can result in the disruption of any political coherence in the work, making it easier for the agent to identify and negotiate the political remnants.

This is only a recommended tactic, and the means of identifying the politics within a horror film are left to the discretion of the agent in the field.

Once we are able to identify the politics of power and audience subjectivity, we can look at the horror film an overlapping milieu of affects and diagrams **[KEYWORD: DIAGRAM]**.

To clarify the first of these, "Affects can be described as extra-discursive and extra-textual. Affects are moments of intensity, a reaction to/on the body at the level of matter" (O'Sullivan, 2001, p. 126).

In terms of the horror film, these affects occur in the direct audience encounter with the film, the bodily reactions including not limited to those involved what we call horror. Affects also occur as things we the audience witness in the subjects of the film perceiving something we ourselves might not. We see affects played out on those bodies on an off screen.

Secondly, diagrams should be understood within the horror film as points where characters or audience act or experience the pushing of a

context through a partial system alien to that context.

(To the assistant)
Play the trailer again.

The assistant presses a button and the shaking paused image of the video reverses rapidly, the scenes playing out backwards and split with static until with inhuman precision the assistant presses another button and the video begins again perfectly at the star of the trailer. The screen is filled with the text "New World Pictures" and without looking the agent resumes their speech.

AGENT

The creatures in black are from another realm, they have ways of operating which are bodily, they have ways of operating which are ideological, principally in terms of the adherence to contracts. They are brought to our realm in this trailer, and the context of middle class late twentieth century North American heterosexual suburbia is pushed through the diagram the figures make up through their bodies, actions, and paths.

Both context and diagram are changed by this encounter, walls might bleed but the laws of the figures in black will be clarified and warped as well. This is just one example of many from this one clip regarding how it can be read as a process of diagrams at the

Vampire [CARE]

level of the world it presents, between its characters.

At the level of audience encounter with the film trailer there are also diagrams at work to be teased out. The very premise of the <u>horror film</u> requires the establishment of partial systems such as narrative or cinematography, which are then disrupted when an alien context is, often violently, pushed through it via the introduction of monsters or jump scares etcetera.

The anxieties of dominant powers, and the foregrounding of affects and diagrams makes horror cinema a particularly useful parallel to art practice, and particularly art practice concerned with subjectivities other than those of dominant power. Which is to say we must be aware of where our empathy and desire leads, including off the path prescribed by the dominant powers of the film.
                    (To assistant)
Next trailer please.

The assistant removes the previous video and inserts a

new one. As they do so they emerge just enough from the

shadows that their face is partially lit by the fire.

They have a large black beak like a crow and sunken black

eyes. They press a button and with the whine of slipping

tracking the video begins to play.

                              CUT TO:VIDEO

Unreadable text, white on black, flashes on the screen in a Gothic font. A man rips some fabric while a woman gasps. Another flash of white unreadable text and then a man struggles to hold down vomit while brushing his teeth in a mirror. More text then a woman stabs a man in the neck in a suburban living room. More text and then a white orb falls rabidly in darkness with the sound of large wild animal roaring or a human in unimaginable pain, then man in suit clutches at the empty space where his head should be and whimpers. More text, then a glass falls on tiles and naked figure writhes in pain in a bathtub. More text, then a room lit only by the light of an open refrigerator, a figure tries to close the door and it jams on a severed hand. Another figure in a different room grabs a woman by the throat. Another figure screams and wrestles with a red car door. Another figure flails at a woman and child as a door closes on them. A woman in the darkness stares at the sky and silently screams. More text, the thump of a drum. The assistant pauses the video and the white text shivers on the screen, almost legible. Once more the agent speaks.

CUT TO:CAVE

                    AGENT
      The collapse of meaning, and the irreducibility
      of something to text is a familiar part of
      art practice. Consider the following-

The agent's eyes roll back into their head and in the

voice of another, with a different accent and pattern of

speech they recite as if reading from a page.

                    AGENT
                  (Possessed)
      "We do not need outrageously perverse acts
      of art or modes of expression never before
      experienced to identifiably slaughter the
      signifable. Only the structure of signification
      itself, a permanent theatre of lawless
      (because it is arbitrary) law (because it
      claims, through 'logic' and 'rationality'
      to be the only option, independent of its
      participants)" (MacCormack, 2012, p. 49).

The agent's eyes return to normal, as does their speech.

The Assistant shuffles nervously behind them and lets out

a small cawing sound like a crow.

                    AGENT
      In the twenty twelve book entitled "Posthuman
      Ethics: Embodiment and Cultural Theory"

philosopher Patricia MacCormack uses the term "catalyst" to describe works of art which facilitate in the audience an "encounter with the outside" (MacCormack, 2012, p. 52).

The outside here referenced is, amongst other distinctions, the outside beyond sovereign language and its speaking subject. Or in MacCormack's own words "The outside involves the disintegration of the 'I' who speaks in speaking about" (MacCormack, 2012, p. 46).

What is also important for us, as agents applying lessons of horror to art is that the outside is not orientated around, or even particularly concerned with the human. MacCormack's project is concerned with an art encounter with "an outside intensification which does not constitute an other, thus a potential self" (MacCormack, 2012, p. 47). The art encounter of interest here is therefore one which is, if only momentarily, unspeakable. As the trailer just now shown attests, such encounters are frequent for audiences of horror, particularly horror cinema. The moment we might call horror for example, is frequently the splashing, drowning sensation of being adrift from signification to ascribe to what we are encountering and therefore orientate this with our existing comprehension of self. At these moments, a little liquid always enters the lungs.

The assistant presses a button on the television monitor

and a new video begins to play. This new video shows

a static line drawing of a square positioned so that
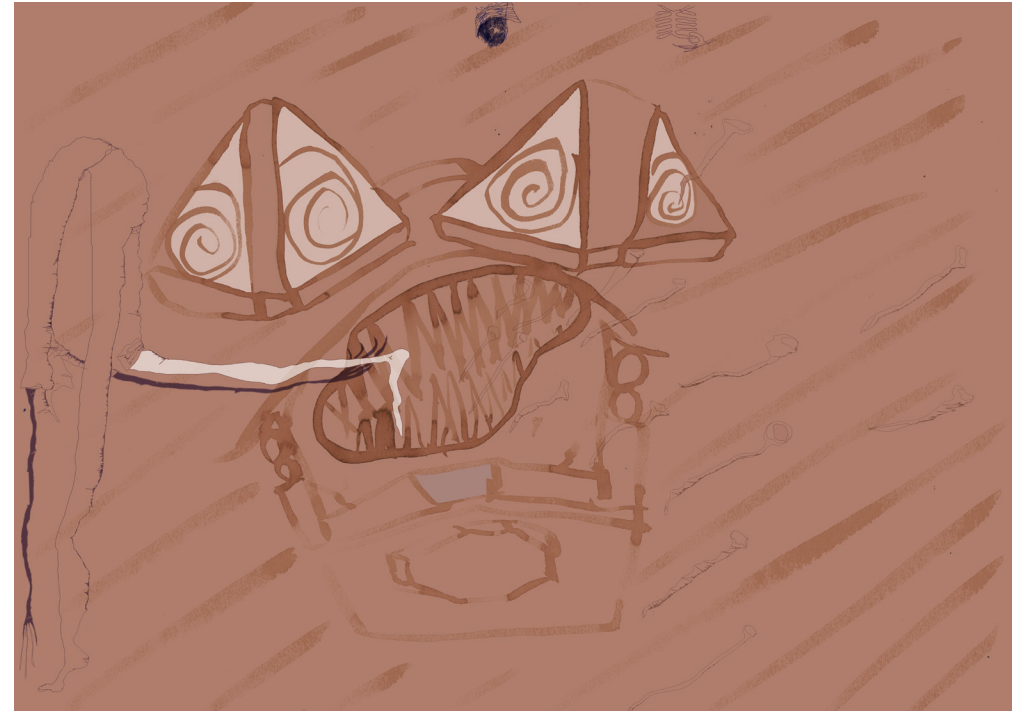
Dog Stand [CARE]

its corners point up, down, left and right. Over this drawing is another, which appears to represented the human digestive system, and over that an esoteric symbol. Behind these drawings plays a video. It is filmed through the glass of a large aquarium, for a while nothing happens and then a small harbour seal smoothly glides across the shot from left to right and disappears. The assistant looks at the agent expectantly, beak slightly open, then looks back at the video. After some more time has passed the seal again slides across the frame of the video, this time from right to left and this time the seal is swimming upside down. Some more time passes and the seal's first glide is repeated. The video is looped though it is hard to see exactly where the loop occurs. Throughout this, the agent does not turn to look at the video, or give any indication of awareness of it other than remaining silent. Eventually after a number of loops of the video, the agent resumes their lecture while the video continues to play. The assistant caws quietly.

                         AGENT
         The question becomes, how can we deal with
         art that is potentially unpredictable,

plural, imminent, and ecstatic as the worlds of horror?

This question is rhetorical, to presuppose that the agency has one definitive answer is to miss the point.

We however should start by killing the policeman of order, names, and authority, and go back to desire.

We should start with the idea of things breaking. Art, us, everything.

It is time for the intermission. Open your own files and we will read together a report from an agent in the field entitled The Woodlands Outside The Finishing Plant[1].

The agent moves, shifting their weight as if to find a new position to lay. In doing so part of their body remains in the previous position and their body stretches and distorts horribly. A gust of wind and sea spray blows into the cave, the fire sparks and crackles. The agent looks as if many of their bones are broken or disconnected while other areas are expanded like muscles filled with lactic acid. Their jaws have grown longer and their mouth wider. They are panting and this makes apparent that their teeth are now spread out between gaps of red gums. Once again the agents eyes

Figure One (presenting as Michelle Forbes when she played the coroner in Homicide: Life on The Street): "The relationship between the analyst and the analysand is naturally one of power, and the group setting often serves to enhance that. The one individual who is trained is distinct from the rest of the group, they have very different stakes. And sooo..."

She drawls this word like it is a crystal ball she is rotating in her hand, inspecting it.

"...I feel its important disclose how this therapy operates. A lot of analysts fall back on the clichéd strategy of saying nothing when asked about the therapy, or even more clichéd, turning any question back on the asker, even if a question is a practical one. There is a huge amount of power in refusing to respond, and more so to deny that there is even the act of refusal taking place. To do this with individuals of any sort, particularly those with a predilection to anxiety... is unethical"

roll up into their head and the begin to speak in yet

another voice.

                    AGENT
                 (Possessed)
         [REDACTED]

The agent finishes their story, and seems to sink into

the bearskin they are wearing, their body returning to

its original size and proportion save for their jaws and

mouth which are still slightly oversized. The assistant

disappears into the shadows and reappears with a steaming

bowl and chopsticks. The assistant crouches with their

back to us in front of the agent and appears to be

feeding them. After a full minute the assistant places

the empty bowl by the fire and returns to their position

standing by the television. The agent's face is wet with

perspiration and a thin broth has run rivulets through

the blood caked around their mouth. A single ramen noodle

hangs from their chin.

                    AGENT
         That was the intermission. I hope you enjoyed
         it. I am now going to talk though through the
         extraction of a concept from horror film which
         can subsequently be applied art practice.

To begin with, we must return to MacCormack's
        description of encountering an outside,
        beyond signification. MacCormack gives this
        process a name.

The agents eyes rapidly roll back and again their accent

and speech changes as they now speak as if reading from

a page.

                        AGENT
                      (Possessed)
        "A term for encountering the outside of
        human the word [...is] 'Ahuman', inspired
        by Guattari's statement: 'In the last resort
        what will be determinant in the political
        and aesthetic plane is not the words and the
        content of ideas but essentially a-signifying
        messages that escape dominant ideologies'"
        (MacCormack, 2014, pp. 1-2).

The agent's eyes roll back down and their voice returns

to normal. The assistant caws and fidgets with visible

discomfort.

                        AGENT
        Becoming Ahuman is a process of breaking the
        dominant codes of self. As already noted, we
        see this in experience of art, particularly
        noticeable in the watching of horror cinema.
        The agency proposes the Japanese horror film
        called Ringu, or The Ring (Nakata, 1998) as

a case study.

From Ringu we extract a diagram, the interrelation of processes and partial systems in it. With this diagram extracted and abstracted, we might then push through the context of art in order to untangle our understanding of what becoming Ahuman is.

For those unfamiliar with Ringu, its plot revolves around the existence of a video cassette of esoteric, disturbing, and degraded images. If a person watches this video cassette, they will receive a phone call, and then seven days later be found dead, their body horribly contorted and a look of unimaginable horror frozen on their face. Ringu follows investigators looking into a series of deaths, who in doing so expose themselves, and us the audience, to the content of the cursed video cassette. We will begin by doing the same.

The assistant retrieves a video from the darkness.

The cassette is housed in a cardboard sleeve on which

is printed patterns of angular parallel lines and the

text "TDK240". The cardboard sleeve covers all of the

cassette other than one end on which a label can be

adhered. The cassette exhibits the signs of years of

reuse, multiple labels have been applied, crossed out,

overdrawn, torn off, relabelled, and defaced. No clear

title can be discerned through the mess of remaining torn fragments of papers, glues, and inks. The assistant pulls the video cassette from its cardboard sleeve and it makes a smooth abrasive noise followed by a small hollow pop as it is finally free. The assistant insets the cassette into the video player and it begins to play automatically. On the television screen plays highly degraded black and white footage of water washing onto a sandy beach. Some distorted singing in Japanese can be heard. The singing continues as the image cuts to the figure of what appears to be a man standing on the shore. The man has a square of fabric about a metre across draped over he head. One arm is at his side and the other is stiffly directed out to the side and down, as if pointing at something on the floor some ten metres out of shot. His head under the fabric is not directed towards where his arm is pointing, but faces straight ahead.

                    AGENT
          That is enough.

The assistant pauses the video, and the image of the

In Country [CARE, DIAGRAM, MANSION, RPG]

pointing man with fabric draped over his head jiggles and

twitches on the television as the video player attempts

to hold the video tape in position against the play

heads.

<div align="center">AGENT</div>
<div align="center">(Warmly)</div>

In order to talk about Ringu, I will draw
upon my own encounter with the film not long
after its UK video release. As an agent
I necessarily filed a field report on this
experience, and this report was used by the
agency to extract the diagram that we will
also examine.

I will attend to two of my observations,
each regarding a scene from the cursed video
within the film which I have just exposed
you to. The first of these concerns the song
which is sung in the first part of the clip.

Note that I do not speak Japanese, and the
video of Ringu which I saw was subtitled in
English.

The scene in question takes place while the
investigators are examining the cursed video
for information in order to understand the
processes of the curse.

Through audio forensics, the investigators
discern that the mostly obscured and degraded
singing is a nursery rhyme or folk song which
ultimately leads them to a coastal community
and a lead in the investigation. The lyrics

of the song are therefore very important
to the characters, and to my experience as
audience invested in the character's pursuit
to save themselves from the curse.

These are the lyrics as depicted in the
English subtitles of the original UK release
of Ringu.

The assistant takes a black marker pen from somewhere in

their clothing and writes directly onto the television

screen over its twitching image. On a single line the

assistant writes "FROLIC IN BRINE". Directly underneath

this, the assistant writes "GOBLINS BE THINE". The sound

of the waves outside the cave increases in volume, and

water laps at the bottom of the frame. The assistant

moves away from the television and the agent continues.

                    AGENT
     Frolic in brine, goblins be thine. That
     is the pivotal text, on which lives are
     balanced, as was presented to me by the
     English translation of this deeply horrifying
     film.

     At this point in watching the film, I was
     gripped with a sense of horror. This
     horror transcended the narrative of the
     film at the moment where the audio forensics
     revealed the words of the song, and these
     were then translated via subtitles. This

transcendence was beyond even what the film
had already performed by positioning both
the protagonists and myself the audience on
an equal position as witness to the cursed
video within the film.

The transcendence provoked by the translated
words is concerned with a dual action of
pointing beyond the frame and obscuring.
My first response to reading the translated
words of the song was that the translation
was incorrect. As a native English speaker
the words "frolic" and "goblin" jar against
the severe and contemporary tone of the rest
of the film. The words "brine" and "thine"
are equally awkward and inappropriate as if
shoehorning a rhyme had been prioritised
over accuracy of information.

My experience of horror at watching Ringu
expanded upon the realisation that material
outside of its narrative world, at the point
of post-release translation, could not be
trusted as it was broken.

This awareness is mirrored by a second
observation of another element also within
the cursed video within the film Ringu. This
observation is in regards to a brief shot
of a figure, their face covered in cloth and
one arm raised to the side as if pointing.
Although the man is never named in the film,
for ease of reference we will refer to this
man as Towel Man. Towel Man is a figure whose
identity, context, and meaning is never
revealed in the film.

Towel Man is obscured, and he is pointing off
frame to something that I as audience never

see. Towel Man presents a vector from himself
to somewhere outside, but what travels along
this vector is utterly hidden.

Concluding from my report of this experience,
it is the view of this agency that Towel Man
demonstrates the presence of absence. Towel
Man functions just as the broken translation
of the song which I also observed. There is
something there which performs a function but
it is incomplete and obscured and continues
beyond the frame.

Following the filing of my field report on
Ringu, the agency identified the diagram
of processes involved and connected this
existing philosophy. The agency's research
into the diagram's processes draws from the
work of psychoanalyst Félix Guattari and
philosopher Gilles Deleuze in particular the
following quote.

Once again the agents eyes roll back into their sockets,

the assistant visibly sags as if suddenly bearing a huge

invisible burden, and when the agent speaks it is as if

there were two different voices coming through the same

throat.

                    AGENT
                  (Possessed)
     "Desiring-machines work only when they break
     down, and by continually breaking down"
     (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 8).

Barely at the end of the sentence the agent's eyes roll

down and they resume in their own voice without any

indication of what had just happened. The tide continues

to rise in the cave. As the waves come in they slop

quietly around the base of the raised slabs on which

the agent lies on their pile of straw, and the assistant

stands with the AV trolley, on which the television

still shows the shaking paused image of Towel Man and

the hand written text across the screen.

> AGENT
> Breakage within the system is a creative
> act, when the system deviates, erodes,
> skips, something new is created. Whether
> the system is one of established ethics,
> aesthetics, cognition these breakages are
> each a creative moment. They mark a point
> where something becomes new.
>
> Deleuze and Guattari's term for such
> breakage is "deterritorialization"(Deleuze &
> Guattari, 1983, p. 33). A function is removed
> from a context, its previous territory, and
> then applied to a new one. The break in the
> machine is not that it ceases the perform
> its previous function, but that it performs
> a new one.
>
> For example, imagine if you will a society
> in which heterosexuality is not only the
> dominant sexual orientation, but the lens

through which the social and political are mediated. Now imagine a queer audience member watches a new tragic horror film from an aesthetic, ethical, and political position not accounted for by the filmmaker. The audience member breaks the film's narrative system but in doing so it becomes a new system, moving from homophobic tragedy to emancipatory triumph against heteronormativity.

In a later text, Guattari discusses how "deterritorialization" is not something transcendental and removed from real situations.

Guattari proposes an example of a singer who first suffers the loss of her mother, and then soon after loses two octaves of her vocal range. However "the loss of consistency of a component will not have been followed, this particular time, by a chain reaction of new inhibitions. It will instead have served as a sensitive plate, as a developer, as an alarm bell" (Guattari, 2009, p. 217).

Guattari continues by stating that "An a-signifying sign--the restriction on vocal performances--marks the halt of something without forbidding, as the context makes clear, that other things intervene" (Guattari, 2009, p. 217).

A small but particularly strong wave breaks against the

raised stone slabs sending a wind salt water mist over

agent and assistant who do not show any acknowledgement

of what has happened. Water dribbles down the screen of

the television distorting the image, and the fire hisses

and steams.

                         AGENT
        What is also important to take from Deleuze
        and Guattari's concept is that it takes the
        Freudian structure of desire as based on lack,
        and rebuilds it based on production. Deleuze
        and Guattari name this conception of desire
        "desiring-production" (Deleuze & Guattari,
        1983, p. 31). Rather than chasing an ever
        receding goal, desire produces more desire.
        It becomes a creative force, with part of
        this creativity arising from breakage.

        Deleuze and Guattari present a way of viewing
        systems as creative and changing. They also
        conceive of systems as emerging from the
        connection and reconnection of processes.
        Their name for these connecting, breaking,
        creative processes is "desiring-machines"
        (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 9).

        Each "desiring-machine" tries to connect
        itself to another (Deleuze & Guattari,
        1983, p. 9). It an attempt fails it will
        try others. In our queer audience example
        the empathy-machine attempts to connect
        to the narrative-machine presented by the
        film. The connection fails, and the empathy-
        machine instead connects to an alternative-
        narrative-machine.

        This is a very crude example, and should
        not be seen as encapsulating all of Deleuze

and Guattari's concepts. Instead the agency
re-purposes their philosophy to explore how
MacCormack's "becoming ahuman" (MacCormack,
2012, p. 43) occurred in the diagram of my
encounter with the film Ringu.

As stated already, a connection breaks and
then flops about attempting to make connection
with other processes. In the diagram of my
encounter with Ringu there were three notable
points of breaking.

Each of these breaks was part of my experience
of horror. At each of these breaks I found
myself dealing with the broken ends of
connections, attempting to plug them into
whatever is available and creating new things
in the process.

At this point background noise of the sea becomes

noticeably louder. The tide inside the cave has reached

the point where the retreating waves no longer leave

exposed floor. The stone slabs, on which are the agent,

assistant, fire and AV trolley, is now an island above

shallow, dark, water which is rising.

                    AGENT
          (Louder above the sound of the sea)
        Three breaks constitute the diagram of
        becoming Ahuman in Ringu. The first is in
        regards the horror that is beneath the water.
        I am aware there is something alive beneath

Crying 9 [MANSION]

the surface but I cannot see it.

The tide is coming in faster, it reaches the top of
some of the stone slabs and the agent's legs. The fire
splutters at the edges.

                         AGENT
                        (louder)
     The second break is in realising that without
     noticing the change, I am also in that same
     body of water, into which I still cannot
     see.

The water is now the level of the agent's reclining
body only their raised head is visible and the soaked
bearskin floats on the surface. The fire is completely
submerged and blackened wood drifts and steams around
the AV trolley, just below the height of the television
screen which is showing its shaky frozen image. The
assistant has picked up a trailing electrical cord and
is holding a four way power extension above their head
and out of the rising water. Both agent and assistant
are completely calm.

                         AGENT
                        (shouting)

The third break is my realising that the
unknown within the water does not make a
distinction between the body of water and
my own body. It does not recognise these
categories and freely crosses between them.

Suddenly, as if a huge sink hole has opened in the floor,

the water level drops, rushing away from the agent and

assistant and leaving them dripping on the stone slabs

with the AV trolley amid a scatter of burnt wood and

seaweed. The soaked bearskin clings to the agents body

making them look small and vulnerable. The sound of

the sea has gone. Still holding up the four way power

extension, the assistant reaches into the darkness and

retrieves another bloody bearskin which they drape over

the agent.

                    AGENT
    MacCormack's process of Ahumanity occurs
    where systems of signification break. In
    watching horror, I am engaged with the film
    through affects, and meaning is pulled away
    from beneath me.

    In my encounter with Ringu, the process of
    becoming Ahuman was most apparent where horror
    stretched out beyond what I had assumed to
    be borders of the film. The horror crossed
    into the English subtitles of the home media
    release, a point beyond the limits of the

fictional narrative.

More importantly, what transgressed this boundary was not something that I could ascribe a name and meaning to. As with Towel Man, it was just an obscured absence which pointed outside of the visible. It pointed at the fact that I was already floating in the body of water that I had thought was securely contained and at a safe remove.

As agents in the field we engage a film and are orientated to it. How we engage with the film involves the meeting of our subjectivity with the politics, aesthetics, ethics etcetera which the film contains.

We are weighing the film against ourselves, plugging our desires into it. Our meaning is pulled away from something to which we have orientated ourselves, it destabilises our own subjectivity, if only briefly.

We might later identify that "a-signifying message" (MacCormack, 2014, p. 2) as the experience of horror, or love, but in the moment, in the field, it had no name.

Even if it were provoked by the most conservative of horror films, the a-signified is, by definition, outside of those power structures. It is for this reason that Guattari, and MacCormack, identify it as a site of radical emancipatory potential. In the affective realm of the Ahuman we are outside of the political structures which define us and which we internalise[2].

It is on that basis that the agency has

"For attention, please call out"

identified, extracted, and abstracted this
Diagram to provide agents in the field with
some means to negotiate these disruptive
forces. The Diagram does not instil meaning
to such forces, but can be deployed and
adapted by agents to bridge spaces in which
meaning is absent.

                                    FADE TO BLACK.

The Use of Horror in Art Practice; Bibliography

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The Use of Horror in Art Practice; Endnotes

1. "The Woodlands Outside The Finishing Plant" is reproduced elsewhere in this PhD Output, to read along the redacted document turn to page 112 of Ahuman Desire.

2. For another approach to destabilisation of the self and affect, which an emphasis on power-structures of race, class, gender and sexuality please see Sara Ahmed's book "Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others" (Ahmed, 2006).

The Coroner's Report [DIAGRAM, MANSION, RPG]

In order to ensure that no artificial categorization, division, and hierarchy is established between "thesis" and "practice", I have avoiding analysing in depth the art works I have produced as part of this research. I have analysed and written accounts of my developing methodology at numerous points. I have also analysed the work of other artists, and tendencies across media as a means of bringing together and unpicking processes of use to art practice.

In parallel to these accounts there have been other things produced, some which take the form of text, or are folded into text after the fact, and a number of them now exist within this PhD Output. "Art works" is a useful term because it suggests a process as much as an object. The *Art Works* which are included across these three books are both objects and processes. They record a process, and activate a new one. The processes recorded are those which exist in parallel to the analysis in the other accounts present which are aligned with more conventional forms such as art history or philosophy. I have attempted to articulate *Diagrammatics* **[KEYWORD: DIAGRAM]** as abstracting a concept and pushing a new context through it in order to gain information from that concept through

OK, Welcome To The Black Parade [CARE, MANSION]

1.   "Ok, welcome to the black parade". The train arrives at Northwick Park with a soft wheeze and it's doors align with those of the concourse and you, one of many passengers, will disembark, your muttered mantra unheard by, or at least unnoticed by, or at least it unremarked upon by anyone else. Your stomach rotates to its own coordinates and growls.

2.   -x

3.   Finding your place in the rhythm and shape of the crowd it carries you through fleshy pipes, suspended from filaments and which constitutes a matrix of passageways (both public and restricted), utility ducts (carrying data, vapour, chemical waste, and energy), and suspension cords. You can smell the 8 people at the cardinal and inter-cardinal points from your position.

4.   -x

5.   In contrast to the thick translucence of the walls and ceiling of the pipes, the floor is covered in no slip steel plates, black with grime and dotted with gum and stickers exposing political views you have no way of telling are sincere or not. The smell of other passengers becomes overwhelming as they work up a sweat during an incline. Your neck hair straightens.

6.   -x

its effects. The process of producing art works can be crudely considered as having a similar function on one level. When I produce an art work I am extracting parts of other systems and pushing new contexts through them in order to understand more of their capacities.

However, these *Art Works* are important elements of this research not only because they are the means through which I gain understanding of capacities of other art works, or concepts, or texts. These *Art Works* are to function not just as *object*, but as *process*. The *Art Works* are provocations and deviations, and sit alongside other forms of research across the three books of the PhD Output specifically because they are able to perform their processes upon that other research. With this in mind, I made the decision early on in this project to not include both an *Art Work* and an analysis of that same *Art Work*. My reasoning for this is that my analysis, from the position of producer, would carry a risk of reducing the *Art Work's* active processes. My analysis of an *Art Work*, could risk replacing that artwork, or at least curtailing its capacities.

In spite of this, there is value in analysing my own *Art Works*, and it forms part of my methodology to do so. Analysis of my own art works allows the uncovering of the processes, which is one aim of this PhD Output as a

7.   Above you, coloured veins in the flesh of the ceiling indicate you are following the right path which is indicated by the purple filament. The tunnel branches repeatedly until only your guiding vein is present over your head and the crowd had thinned so that you can walk at full stride without fear of catching heels. Your hackles relax, but the smell is still overwhelming.

8.   -x

9.   A junction leads to another platform and the last passengers break off. Alone you climb to the exit from which leaves and dust have blown, griming up the translucent walls. Finally on the surface for a moment then the doors to your destination are ahead with the logo of "parexel" are engaged into the marble floor under your feet and then you are inside again.

10.   -x

11.   You pass administrators who have you sign, carry, surrender, replace and read various pink documents as you pass through the building. You suppress your muttering in company and release it in quiet carpeted beige corridors where you never see another soul. Explanations, tests and countless waiting rooms follow and then at last there is the rented ward.

12.   -x

13.   Your nails clatter as you walk through the final doors which slide shut behind you with a blast of cool, dead air. Your nose, as finely tuned an

whole.

My approach follows the creative auto-ethnographic methodology of ethnographer Kirin Narayan (Narayan, 2012) and the reflexive methodology of artist Elizabeth Prices's "Sidekick" (Price, 2002, 2013) which analyses an object as a means to investigate the process of analysis itself. This document deals with the analysis of the processes in an ongoing *Art Work*, set aside specifically for the purposes of this living autopsy. Both of these methodologies allow a written account of an event or object to become a creative site, so this document is a creative account of processes taking place in a sample of my art practice.

There are a lot of points where this account could start. It could begin with a nervous habit I have of repeating a phrase from something I have read or heard or imagined, as a practice which I cannot be sure is one of self regulations or of self punishment or something else. This account could also begin with long standing rules which I have used in my practice for over a decade, and have become reinforced not by a relationship to their function but more a superstition, another kind of habit. Lastly, the account could begin in a tactic I have of approaching art making through bricolage. All of these starts will necessarily involve fiction, whether through the

instrument as it is, can pick out nothing but yourself here. "You understand that you will receive no therapeutic value from this procedure and you understand the risks involved. Payment will be finalized at the end of the trial"

14.   -x

15.   You nod at the nurse who hasn't looked at you while reading the final disclaimer before showing you to your bed. "Dinner is at noon" and the door shuts and you are alone.

16.   -x

17.   The room so scrubbed and empty that it feels anechoic, devoid not of sound but smell, and therefore life. You feel both anxious and safely alone. "Ok, welcome to the black parade".

18.   -x

19.   Bags are emptied into bedside locker. You have a room to yourself for the remainder of the day after a nurse brings you lunch (two sandwiches the kind of which you buy from a shop that primarily sells something other than food) and some crisps (the kind you would pay too much for from a vending machine in a place that has no other provision for selling food).

20.   -x

21.   There is a TV in one corner of the room, an ancient console and a copy of Wii Sports. You make one serve in tennis before your hospital gown billows

choice of where to begin and where to travel along something like mass of tubifex worms, how I use language, what I edit out, what I misremember. I am making something new from the parts of other things, and all of these parts are remade in the process. As memory, then as words. So with that in mind, I think I will start with bricolage.

The way I began the work which could be said to be towards the *Art Work* called "Ok, Welcome To The Black Parade" (OWTTBP) was by collecting parts. I pulled together things which caught my attention and which in doing so had resonated with other things already in the pile.

Desire Piles[1] as a method allow me to collect together things across categories including materials, emotions, names, fragments of text, events etc., and variants, derivatives and combinations of these, without concern for structure or category. In one sense the *Desire Pile* is a prosthetic memory, it is simply a list of things I am drawn to in some way during a period of time. In another sense, which is more to do with the matter of using the list, they a way of rendering things more malleable and the first stage of *Diagramming* a number of processes which make up my art practice.

out leaving your otherwise naked body exposed like some obscene jellyfish. There is no one else here, but you can't help feel that this is part of a test. Returning to bed you lay until boredom takes you to sleep.

22.   -x

23.   The next day the treatment begins. A line is put into a vein in your arm and this in turn is connected to a drip which is held by a small drone which tracks a symbol on a plastic band attached to your wrist. The hair is thick on your arms and the peripheral venous catheter is secured with rubbery tape pulls painfully.

24.   -x

25.   Other subjects join you in your room. The inquisitive or chronical bored try the games system. The oblivious or overconfident continue to play after the first serve. You watch, you fidget, you make low subconscious growls when your boredom dazes you enough to forget yourself. Your bed is now full of crumbs and it is impossible to lie comfortably.

26.   -x

27.   The trial is for a course of treatment which includes drugs and physiotherapy (the nurse explains) and it is the latter elements which causes many subjects to drop out and forfeit their compensation (the physiotherapist explains). The days begin to blur. Your teeth feel noticeably more blunt than you remember. You wonder why this is.

It is also worth restating that *Desire Piles* is a tactic (among others in this PhD Output) for holding the unstable things whose negotiation can make up the practice of art, without translating/reducing/fossilising these things. The list of things in the *Desire Pile* is not fixed. It can be edited, and meaning of the words written down is mutable. However this is the point of departure from a prosthetic memory. The *Desire Pile* is not to be thought of as a reliable account. It is to be thought of as a badly kept ledger, in awful handwriting, with no constant system. The order of things is always considered to be incorrect. Something described is thought of in terms of multiple possibilities, such as factual description, a metaphor, a mistake[2]. In reading the *Desire Pile* the aim is not to recall something, to recover a fixed point, but to see it as an alienated provocation which could as easily lead to somewhere never visited before as to forensically return to the initial point of interest.

The things in the *Desire Pile* of *OWTTBP* are as follows:

● My anxious tic, muttering the phrase "Ok, Welcome To The Black Parade" without knowing what it means.

● The paid drug trial I turned down which subsequently made the national news when all subjects not given a placebo dose became

28. -x

29. The drone hums above you at all times. You wonder if it's battery ever needs recharging or if this happens then you are asleep. You spend your days walking across balancing planks and climbing ladders fixed at very shallow angles. You are given weights which are slotted into pockets of the fabric bands around your limbs (when did you put these bands on?).

30. -x

31. You have lost track of how many days are left on this trial. The elastic resistance cords which connect the bands on your limbs and forehead and chest and tale and toes (are there more bands than before) are switched for lighter or heavier resistance according to a complicated schedule designed for your by algorithm and is not based on your standard calendar days.

32. -x

33. There are a few other subjects in your ward, but you are not sure if they were here with your intake or have arrived afterwards or are from another ward brought over as numbers reduce. Your waist trainer seems to be in the middle of group range. Some are ahead of you in process, some are a few tightening sessions behind you. The nurse repeats "it isn't a race".

34. -x

34.1. You wake up before your bedmate, they are still deep under, but

critically, and agonisingly ill, a number of which lost parts of limbs and were permanently disfigured.

● A watercolour diagram exploring thoughts on how some occult practices sit between structures which follow a protocol, desires, and phenomenological accounts.

● The moment when control is lost.

● The repeated trope in cinema where the camera assumes a first person perspective of a character who is in some way incapacitated and fades down to black and then back up to a later point in the time repeatedly to show the character slipping in and out of consciousness.

○ The sub trope of a character (and by extension of the first person position, the audience) learning something which is of importance to them, right at the point of losing consciousness.

● Depression as a feeling of love.

● Disablement.

● The crash which takes place off screen between the events at the end of the film "Aliens" and the beginning of the film "Alien³"

● A formal approach to writing where an arbitrary restriction, such as "each paragraph must be 5 lines long".

● My intention of continuing a practice/output of producing watercolour diagrams in square format which are then scanned and

not so deep that their eye do not flicker in REM. You look over at the monitor on its wheel trolly. The graphs show that a few moments ago you and they were in near perfect sync. You watch that point where your line (blue) and theirs (green) separates as it drifts off the left side of the screen out of view.

34.2. You wake up and the ceiling is so close that you briefly panic before remembered where you are. You body is packed in crash gel and the window is small (for looking in, not looking out). It must be (?) night (?) because it is dark on the other side of the glass. That is the (real) ceiling above. You are horizontal which means you are in transit not storage.

34.3. You wake up and eyes rest on the reflection of a security camera lens high above where you can pick out the windows of your fellow passengers containers and their sleeping faces and you miss them painfully. "Ok, welcome to the black parade" you whisper to no one that can hear, wondering how habits can outlast the anxiety which birthed them. You sleep.

34.4. You wake up and immediately look up at the reflection in the camera lens. Your eyes are still better. You look into all the tiny lit windows, sleeping faces reversed but still familiar and still capable to inspiring such longing that is hard to

published view my Instagram account along with short narrative (itself based on a different diagram) which is presented in the comments section of the published image post.

- Intestines.
- Dogs.
- Solidarity.

In this case, the *Desire Pile* is made up entirely of text. This is not always the case. In *Desire Piles* for other works I included drawn shapes or indicators of relative size or light levels. Sometimes the *Desire Pile* is a bullet point list, but it might equally form a constellation of elements, or a horrible gibbering homunculus.

With these piled things accounted for as part of the work *OWTTBP*, I wrote the bulk of my text. I looked at the screen of the laptop where I was writing. When I was losing momentum, I looked at the *Desire Pile* and returned to writing. When it was clear that this text was far too long to practically fit within an Instagram post, as it would involve over 20 individual comments and go beyond my expectations of the audience, I wrote a new short text in one sitting which become the epilogue to *OWTTBP*.

pull away from. Their eyes flicker under and you wonder if they have woken to watch you. Far away an alarm cries out as you drift under.

34.5.   You wake up and the outside is totally black, you cannot even see the reflections of the other windows. You wonder if you have lost your sight, if it improved beyond capacity or if you strained it by looking too hard and too early when you should have been asleep. "Ok, welcome to the black parade". You slow your breathing. "Ok, welcome to the black parade".

34.6.   You wake up and you can see again. Through the glass the room is on fire. Flames crawl across the ceiling like lizards. Something is wrong with the gravity. It is normally impossible to know which way is down through the gel, but your organs shift in a jolting spiral. The transport is in free-fall and wounded. Gel presses into you and you black out.

34.7.   You wake up and someone is carrying you. Two or more bodies are carrying you. You look down and your toes trail through patchy scorched grass and bump over turned soil. Most of your long claws are either broken or ripped off. You can cannot see them but your fingertips feel like nothing but pain. Someone stumbles, everything goes pink and then black.

As the majority of the text making up *OWTTBP* so far had not been used in the output I had intended for it, and was not suitable for this output, it became an object which I could now consider a new home for. *OWTTBP* incorporated a number of elements that are part of the practice I have developed in this PhD, but which I have not analysed in depth, in part due to a long standing rule which I have applied to my work since 2007.

This is the rule which I call "The One Work Buffer".

The *One Work Buffer*: Do not analyse the work which is currently in progress, or the last work completed because backward trajectory of analysis will match the forward trajectory of desire and cause entropy. Leave one completed work as a buffer between the present and the site of analysis.

This rule has served me well for so long that I have ceased to question it. It allows me to create an airlock between a delicate process which I feel will not ever be fully accounted for, and another process which creates a more substantial though imperfect replica but which annihilates anything it cannot replicate.

35.   -x

36.   Days unwind and you are cared for. In a makeshift triage centre the the less damaged crash survivors care for the more severely broken and bury those beyond care. One of your lower legs could not be saved and is removed, the skin neatly folded around the amputation. As it is below a joint, a simple prosthesis is made and fitted.

37.   -x

38.   The physiotherapy undergone as part of the trial involved an equal balance of exercises based on a four as well as two point posture, and the training of your skeleton has left you as comfortable in either though the prosthetic favours moving on all fours due to gait and weight distribution. You feel comfortable in your body, and your muttering is infrequent to minimal.

39.   -x

40.   No one knows what happened with the crash. No one knows where you were heading. No one knows where you are, and no one remembers what happened before you were packed into containers in the rented laboratory space. No one feels that the crash was planned, but no one feels that anyone will come looking for you either.

41.   -x

42.   The group's feeling is that you are safe now, and capable of

Looking at *OWTTBP*, a work in progress which incorporated a number of elements I had not critically examined, I decided that breaking the *One Work Buffer Rule* would provide a new point where "practice" and "thesis" could cross in this PhD. I have a suspicion that breaking the rule and stratifying a process which has not yet reached its own point of entropy will mean it will never function as an artwork in a manner I am satisfied with. Therefore it is used here as an experiment, something grown specifically to learn about the process of growth through an invasive procedure which will stop it from ever reaching maturity.

I found it initially counter intuitive to think about art practice in terms of setting a target and course-correcting until this target is arrived at. I feel more comfortable thinking of art practice in terms of the model of desire set out in Deleuze and Guattari's "Anti-Oedipus" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983). In terms of the *Desire Piles* I pull together things which I am drawn to at around the same time, the alienation effect which I described as a like a "badly kept ledger" creates new lines of desire through the combination of things in the pile. I following the desire to add something to the pile. Once in the pile like any other heap of refuse new things are produced: I misremember why I added something. The proximity of something else

maintaining this safety through the mutual care you feel so strongly to give to one another. You can all see and smell so far and so clearly that the group group's awareness is extended far beyond your compound of halls and jewelled tunnels under a thin leafy canopy on a low rise over pink flower meadows.

43.   -x

43.1.   Epilogue: I wrote a story about a group of red dogs running through a meadow full of pink flowers.

43.2.   The dogs are taking turns at carrying one of them that had lost a leg and the wound is still healing.

43.3.   The dogs run through field after field and in one then find a well so they can drink.

43.4.   One of the dogs is sick and so they eat some leaves in order to vomit and In the shape of the vomit they see which direction to head next and how fast.

43.5.   They arrive at a port and there's been a plague and all the humans are dead and there's one luxury yacht left moored with a shocked looking corpse

makes an object strange. I literally can't read my own handwriting. The material conditions under which the object was made are of more interest than the object itself. I thought it was a map but it's actually a wolf.

Desire produces more desire. The process of drawing seems like a site where this is easily perceptible. I draw something because I desire to do so, and in doing this new desires are brought into being, which I perhaps would not have come to otherwise. A single mark drawn with a drawing tablet and computer is a transition which opens up new desires which were not there before the mark was made, including perhaps the desire to erase that mark[3]. However in this PhD I do have aims. Through this work I have learnt that just as there can be different degrees of stability in the things which make up a list, there can be degrees of stability to an aim. The aim itself changes as it gets closer.

Over the course of this PhD, a working summary of my research aims has included "develop a practice that embraces instability of narrative, and active speculation". Therefore my aim in dissecting *OWTTBP* has been to draw out and develop points where active audience speculation could take place. I envisaged the regularly structured narrative as the vertebra of a spine. Between each vertebrae were potential trajectories away from that

draped over the wheel.

43.6.   The dogs pull the body into the sea and load up with boat with supplies and put the wounded dog on board and cast off.

43.7.   They have many adventures and burgle a great number of oil rigs where the surviving humans had gone to escape the plague.

43.8.   They meet other packs on different continents and steal a fleet of luxury yachts and tour the globe in a huge armada eventually establishing a commune across Greenland (because it is practical) and Newfoundland and Labrador (because it's funny).

of the sequence which makes up the spine. As the narrative progresses, the strength of the spine would support more departing trajectories, and eventually departing trajectories would support themselves without need of a spine.

Considering how *OWTTBP* had grown from a diagram plus other elements from the *Desire Pile* I began at the point to reinterpret the text as a new diagram. I drew the network of vascular pipes which begin in raw leaking tube as the text narrative abruptly begins "in media res*"*, or "in the middle of events". Beginning *in media res* marks the first point of speculation. Events prior to the narrative are not revealed, and the narrative begins in motion with the arrival of a train on which the narrator is positioned. I drew the network of pipes where the narrator walks, and the oozing ends where another path is indicated but not pursued. These oozing ends are also the breaks between the fixed length paragraphs of the text. These are the points where the work could develop deviations, points away from the narrative spine.

The next section of the diagram was the institution where the narrator describes with different levels of detail some of the drug trials and

exercises they undertake. As this section took place in a building which is not fully described, and in which the narrator undergoes changes and experiences procedures which they sometimes cannot fully recall I drew this section as something like a growth or unspecified organ or tumour. A site where change takes places and various points of departure are available, including the points of departure between the paragraphs which take place there.

There is a transition which occurs between this *Institution Organ* section, and the next element of the diagram. In the narrative, an event takes place which the narrator does not acknowledge but which it is intended that the audience is aware of after it happens. The narrator enters the institution with the understanding that they will be used in a medical test study for a limited duration. The narrator's account of their experience in the institution is incomplete. They do not describe everything as it is first mundane and later they are no longer able to fully account for what is happening. During this part of the narrative the description shifts and the narrator describes themselves not as a person whose body is used in an experiment for a limited time, but as a permanently transformed thing for future use. No longer the site of test "of the product", but "the product itself". The repeated refrain of returning to the ward bed changes to the

narrator lying down in a container, and no longer being in the building but

in a transport vehicle. To account for this transition, I drew the next section

of the diagram as a growth which emerges from the *Institution Organ* at a

point which cannot be seen.

Throughout these first three sections of the diagram are black dots.

These dots mark the point where the narrator utters their tic, an element

repeated in these sections, but absent after the event which marks the

end of the third. The third section I will call *The Pipe* and its connection

from the previous section is hidden, to show that in the text there is

a subtle narrative shift. In this section the narrator describes being

within a container that is transported in a vehicle and slips in and out of

consciousness, revealing a development outside of their container and in

the vehicle itself through this displaced, strobed, observations. There are

no points of departure in this section. The text changes its pattern from

four-line paragraphs, to a series of nine paragraphs all of which are five

lines in length and begin with the same four words "You wake up and".

I had made a decision that this section of the narrative spine would be

solid, with no space between its vertebrae for departure and therefore

a constant rhythm emphasised by the repeated words which begin

each paragraph. This rhythm felt effective as a means of emphasising a

point where the narrator is denied all agency by being physically unable to move, and would allow something to be built which would then be contrasted by a marked break and the end of this section.

At the end of *The Pipe*, the diagram is dawn as a ruptured oozing edge which then connects to a form similar to the *Institution Organ*. I will refer to this section as *The Camp-site Organ*. The connection from *The Pipe* to *The Camp-site Organ* is depicted as a broken oozing edge because it depicts a transition not witnessed, but open to speculation. The progression within *The Pipe* implies that an accident has taken place and the beginning of *The Camp-site Organ* describes the immediate aftermath of a violent air crash. The event itself is not described as it takes place while the narrator is unconscious. The violence of the event, its pre-shadowing through descriptions in *The Pipe* and aftermath in *The Camp-site Organ* makes the transition a site of speculation, as well as a point where a deviation might occur. This contrasts to the transition from *The Institution Organ* to *The Pipe*, which is smooth and with no departure, and therefore involves no leakage from speculation.

In terms of the diagram, *The Camp-site Organ* operates in the same manner as the *Institution Organ*. The narrator remains in one site and

Crying 9 [MANSION]

recounts events and growth with different degrees of detail but always as incomplete accounts. This section also returns to the four line paragraph form, with the space between each paragraph being open for deviations.

The *Camp-site Organ* is followed by the final part of the diagram which I will refer to as *The Dream*. There is no connection between *The Camp-site Organ* and *The Dream* in the diagram, but instead a close proximity of fluid which depicts speculation. The reason for this is that *The Dream* is an epilogue, and begins by announcing itself as such. The transition is therefore outside of the account of the narrator, and potentially outside of the form of the previous section of text. In the diagram *The Dream* is depicted as a number of lumps shaped like closing brackets which proceed away from *The Camp-site Organ* and sit on a dispersing area of speculation fluid. This section is diagrammed in this manner because the form of *The Dream* is very different from the previous sections. The narrative voice is different from earlier sections, and is itself describing not events in real time, but a story written at some point in the past.

The formal constraints of this section are looser, paragraphs are mostly two lines long, but some are only one line and some are three. There is a lot more space for speculation in this section, beginning with questions

about who is speaking, and continuing in narrative which is only loosely described but has some potential lines of connection to the preceding larger narrative. In diagramming this section I felt that the form would need to become inverted. I represented the narrative of section three as the fluid of speculation, with the lumps shaped like closing brackets being diagrams of the gaps between the paragraphs.

Whereas in previous sections of the narrative the gaps between paragraphs were points of departure such as improvised tangents were this work to be eventually realised as a performance, or as commentary or some other form of writing were this work to be realised as published text. In this final section I envisaged the relationship altering, from deviations which exist in place "above" the narrative, to a place below. The deviations within *The Dream* would need to be in the realm of animal sounds or simple drawings. *The Dream* is a barely present narrative interspersed with affective voids. When annotating the diagram I labelled the voids within *The Dream* as "non-linguistic lumps" and the fluid around them as "utterly unreliable fiction".

I wrote a brief account of the aims of the work in the leftover space around the diagram, including references to the work of Julia Kristeva and Patricia

MacCormack. These are two thinkers whose work around the permeability of borders had been made relevant to the work through the segmented structure of the diagram.

OWTTBP Diagram One now accounts for *OWTTBP*.

The diagram process is useful for the purposes of negotiating art practice because it allows for elements which are unknown, unstable, not yet in existence, or are simply a mislabelled space where nothing will ever exist. I call these elements *Lacunae*. In *OWTTBP* there are a number of *Lacunae* which occupy the spaces between the declining narrative spine of the text and these are each marked with an "x". In *OWTTBP Diagram One*, the *Lacunae are* identifiable as the yellowish fluid which spurts from pipes or ruptured seams. Without knowing yet what these elements are, I am still able to provide them conceptual space within the work. I look at *OWTTBP Diagram One* and imagine organs that have functions which must be performed but also leaks and creative sites emerging around them. The chain of organs is converting proteins and whole ecologies of bacteria are consuming and excreting. However the chain of organs is not in a closed system. There are points where fluids spill out and meet germs not yet imagined and in an unnamed space defined only by the tension of

leaked globbing plasma forms a new site of production. When I look away, and then look back at *OWTTBP Diagram One*, the leak is now somewhere else.

I have now produced an aim for *OWTTBP*. It is an experiment, an organism grown explicitly to dissect. I look at it and its structure reminds me of an earlier work, "TFW: The Formless Wastes"[4], where I used a segmented narrative spine in a live performance, and between its vertebrae I departed from this narrative spine with performance elements only partly rehearsed and often drawn as much from random selection and some sense of the audience.

OWTTBP I decided, would be a good site to continue exploring some of the functions from "TFW: The Formless Wastes", but to fit within my PhD Output it would need to fit within the books of which its output is comprised. In order to move towards this end, I drew a new diagram, which is called *OWTTBP Diagram Two*. At the time I felt that I was moving further towards abstraction of the work, which would free it from being a performance translated on the page. In hindsight, I do not think this is actually what happened, and *OWTTBP Diagram Two* is a useful dead end[5]. *OWTTBP Diagram Two* is not such a diagram but a fixed structure.

Through a number of different degrees of drawing and text it articulates the same thing: A segmented narrative spine, with provocations away from this spine positioned between the vertebrae, but offset. This is not a diagram which opens up new desire, but a reduction to a common structure. The structure which came to mind when returning to *OWTTBP Diagram Two* was that of commentary, especially commentary in literature where the left hand pages feature the text and the facing pages feature contextual comments on a register above that of the text, and inserted between its vertebrae by means of typographical devices such as *, †, ‡, §, ‖, ¶, etc.

At this point in the development of the work I tried to understand what had happened. The process of *Diagrammatics* is not something which I expect to endlessly generate new desires or new understanding of systems, it is itself a system which is constantly breaking down and so stalling does not seem an unsurprising possibility.

My artist friend Alice[6] came over on the plane to stay with me for a few days[7]. We picked up some threads from previous conversations about how dogs[8] relate to *Desiring Production* and then we went wading in the North Sea[9] and then Alice bought some things from Superdrug[10] and then we got the ferry over the river[11] and the metro home to Gateshead[12]. Alice

and I talked about the progression of diagrams in *OWTTBP* and how the last one had been a wrong turn. We have an ongoing plan to produce more artworks together and so I redrew a diagram of *OWTTBP*, removing its connection to the narrative it originated in and presenting it as just as a constellation of abstract processes. Between Alice and myself we made what I am labelling *OWTTBP Diagram Three* but will have another name soon and the process of making the artwork continues beyond this PhD.

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The Coroner's Report; Endnotes

1. It should be noted that *Desire Piles* are different from the from the clustering of texts employed in the system called *Digestion*. The clusters in *Digestion* are organised around and between theme's which are their points of commonality. Even while these themes might be reconsidered and change once enough new texts are added, the texts are always orientated through something. *Desire Piles* don't need or have anything to orientated them. If anything, *Desire Piles* tend towards differences rather than the commonalities of the clustering in *Digestion.*

2. This becomes provocation to encourage process of accidents and shifting between different kinds of interpretations and affects. Consider this comment on writing from author William Gibson in an interview with literary critic Larry McCaffery;

"WG: [...] I like accidents, when an offhand line breezes by and you think to yourself, Yes [*sic*], that will do. So you put it in your text and start working with it, seeing how it relates to other things you've got going, and eventually it begins to evolve, to branch off in ways you hadn't anticipated. Part of the process is conscious, in the sense that I'm aware of working this way, but how these things come to be embedded in the text is intuitive. I don't see how writers can do it any other way. I suppose some

pick these things up without realizing it, but I'm conscious of waiting for

them and seeing where they lead, how they might mutate.

LM: Sounds like a virus.

WG: It is-and only a certain kind of host is going to be able to allow the thing to

keep expanding in an optimal way" (McCaffery, 1990, pp. 133–134).

3. Hitting Ctrl+z is still work, it's also still production.

4. Reflections on, and accounts of "TFW: The Formless Wastes" appear in

multiple documents across the PhD Output.

5. Ctrl+z is still work and still production.

6. Alice Rekab wrote her PhD in part on an approach to art practice using the

concept of diagrams in the work of philosopher François Laruelle.

7. My friend Alice has come to stay with me once a year since we met on the

internet in 2016 when we bonded over our mutual emotional investment in the

relationship between the character Worf and his son Alexander on the television

show "Star Trek: The Next Generation". The previous time Alice was here the was

very heavy snow and we got lost because the visibility was so bad and we walked

along some of the highest roads in Gateshead to try and get home and watched

cars skid out as they tried to drive while two feet of snow came down. We also went to the cinema to see the superhero movie "Black Panther" but I remember almost nothing about the film because when we left I received a message that one of my friends had taken his own life in order to escape from months of akathisia caused by his antidepressants. At the time this happened I was also taking antidepressants called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors and one of the effects of this medication that I had was the inability to cry. I do not remember much of the film but I remember clearly leaving the cinema, knowing that my friend had died and missing them but experiencing something broken in the chain of emotion and its responses.

8. We both have a love for dogs which can only be described as painful and bordering on the debilitating and all our conversations on philosophy pass through conversations on dogs.

9. The North Sea is very clear and the shore at North Shields is full of dead ends where if you climb a fence you can have space to yourself.
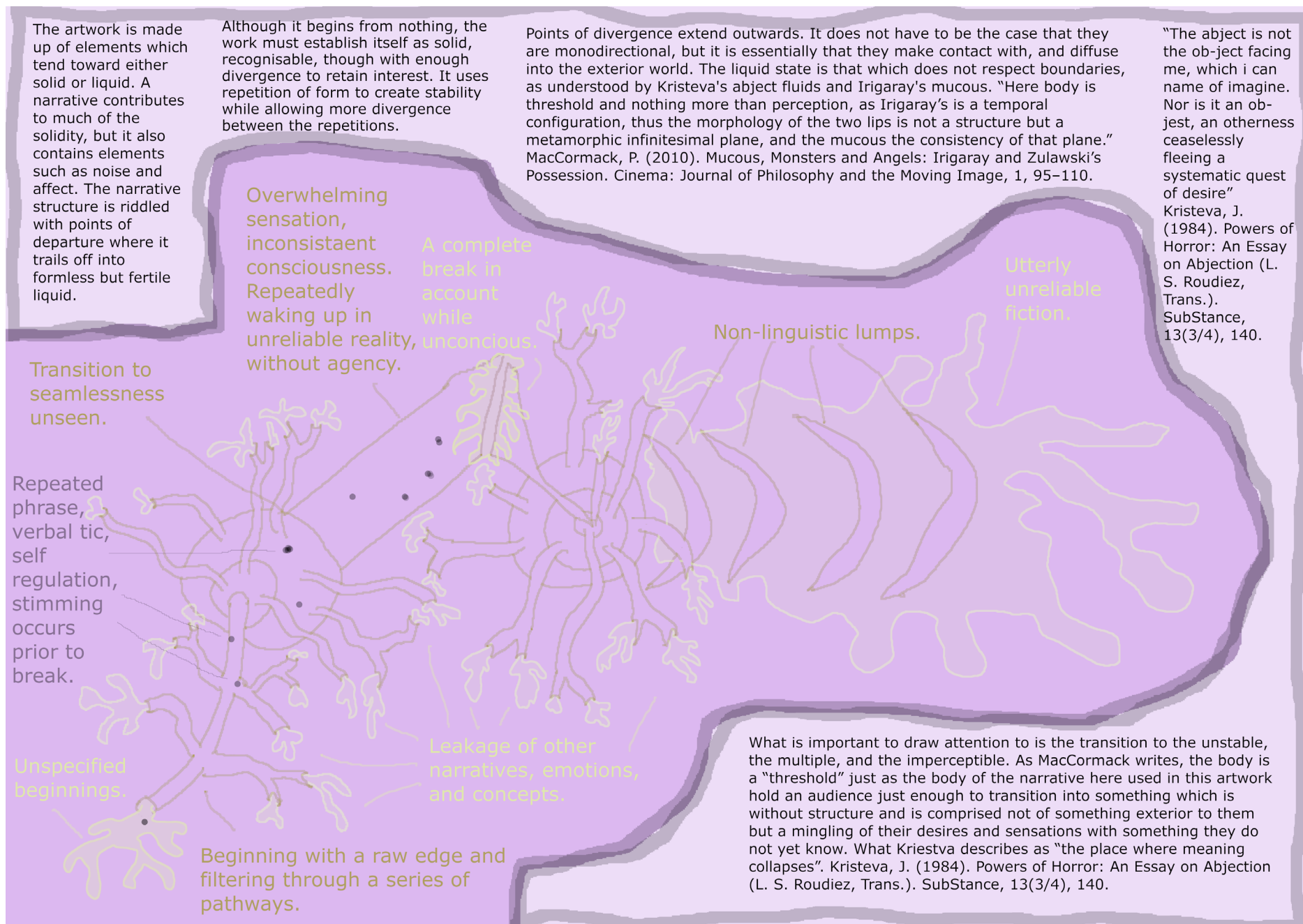
10. A lot of things which you would buy from the chemist are very expensive in Ireland.

11. It is worth getting the ferry whenever you have the opportunity, the Tyne is a

clear river and on the ferry you can sit outside close to the water.

12. I live in Felling, my house is 94 metres above sea level.

The artwork is made up of elements which tend toward either solid or liquid. A narrative contributes to much of the solidity, but it also contains elements such as noise and affect. The narrative structure is riddled with points of departure where it trails off into formless but fertile liquid.

Although it begins from nothing, the work must establish itself as solid, recognisable, though with enough divergence to retain interest. It uses repetition of form to create stability while allowing more divergence between the repetitions.

Points of divergence extend outwards. It does not have to be the case that they are monodirectional, but it is essentially that they make contact with, and diffuse into the exterior world. The liquid state is that which does not respect boundaries, as understood by Kristeva's abject fluids and Irigaray's mucous. "Here body is threshold and nothing more than perception, as Irigaray's is a temporal configuration, thus the morphology of the two lips is not a structure but a metamorphic infinitesimal plane, and the mucous the consistency of that plane." MacCormack, P. (2010). Mucous, Monsters and Angels: Irigaray and Zulawski's Possession. Cinema: Journal of Philosophy and the Moving Image, 1, 95–110.

"The abject is not the ob-ject facing me, which i can name of imagine. Nor is it an ob-jest, an otherness ceaselessly fleeing a systematic quest of desire" Kristeva, J. (1984). Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection (L. S. Roudiez, Trans.). SubStance, 13(3/4), 140.

Overwhelming sensation, inconsistaent consciousness. Repeatedly waking up in unreliable reality, without agency.

A complete break in account while unconcious.

Utterly unreliable fiction.

Non-linguistic lumps.

Transition to seamlessness unseen.

Repeated phrase, verbal tic, self regulation, stimming occurs prior to break.

Unspecified beginnings.

Leakage of other narratives, emotions, and concepts.

Beginning with a raw edge and filtering through a series of pathways.

What is important to draw attention to is the transition to the unstable, the multiple, and the imperceptible. As MacCormack writes, the body is a "threshold" just as the body of the narrative here used in this artwork hold an audience just enough to transition into something which is without structure and is comprised not of something exterior to them but a mingling of their desires and sensations with something they do not yet know. What Kriestva describes as "the place where meaning collapses". Kristeva, J. (1984). Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection (L. S. Roudiez, Trans.). SubStance, 13(3/4), 140.

OWTTBP Diagram One [DIAGRAM]

Output: Written document which is the diagram/plan for exploding narrative, it surrenders its own authority as it progresses in the manner of:
-Asignifying rupture
-Becoming Animal
-Ecriture Feminine
The "Narrative Spine" is placed alongside and broken by the instructions for deviation. These deviations begin in language but progress to noise.
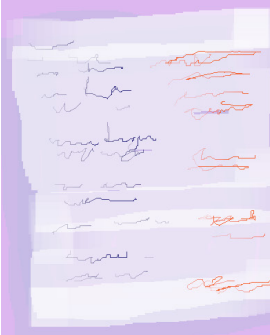
NB: Prior to output, narrative+instructions are "worked" as audio and retranscribed/encoded into text.

narrative spine

Order

Narrative A

Narrative A

Hallucination

Noise

Disorder
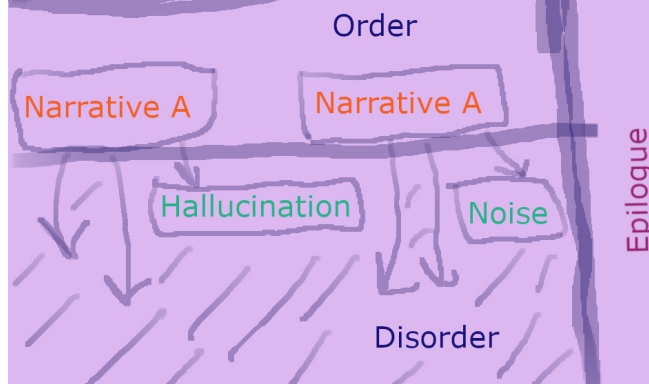
Epilogue

Departure, Deviation, Divination, Damage
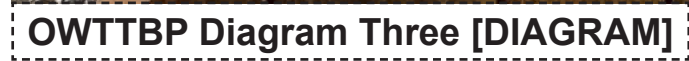
Including:
-Character generation,
-Speculation on other paths
-Interpreted audio
-Reinterpreted original diagram
-Provocation to theory
-Relationship to life in moment of writing.

Overwhelming affect

1

3

5

7

9

11

13

ETC

34.1
34.2
34.3
34.4
ETC

36

ETC

Noises

43.1

ETC
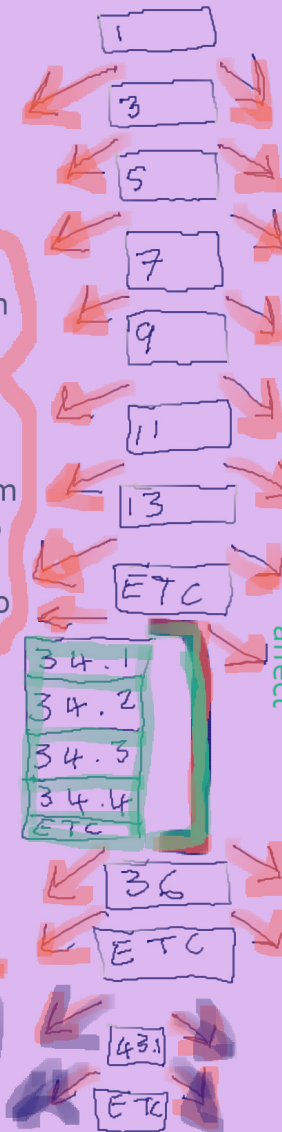
OWTTBP Diagram Two [DIAGRAM]

OWTTBP Diagram Three [DIAGRAM]

Mansion Theory [DIAGRAM, MANSION, RPG]

An incomplete theory of *The Mansion*.

● The mansion adds more rooms to accommodate the desire of the artist-audience.

● The desire of the artist-audience in forming a new room, constitutes an *Event*[1].

● The successive rooms in the mansion constitute a *Series*.

● *Events* work through *Series*, each new room alters all others in the *Series*.

● There are *Series* for each artist-audience combination.

● *Mansion* is the name for all *Series* connected to one artwork.

● *Mansion Theor*y is an approach to art making which is concerned with the proliferation of rooms.

You can barely hear them as the wind you hadn't even noticed picking up is now gusting across the fleshy green surface of the landing pad and bits of rubbish and swept up and getting stuck to the giant spikes and now the little egg car is swerving to avoid the body of what even is that and over the roar you hear something,

Notes on *The Mansion*

The Mansion has been something I have been returning to since before this PhD began. Director Robert Altman's film "Gosford Park" (Altman, 2001) demonstrably utilises *The Mansion* as enclosure of interconnected social and material processes which work through its characters whilst being split along distinct class lines. The estate, *Gosford Park* itself, is a great gothic[2] machine[3] comparable to author Mervyn Peake's "Gormenghast" (Peake, 1999) in which the physical architecture of connected and divided rooms is also traversed and breached by the processes which run through it. I am intrigued by the idea of a space in which overlapping processes take place and change through their points of overlap. I'm also intrigued by the idea of a nominally constrained space, which can be expanded to accommodate any possible process while retaining a firm border, even while pointing to a dynamic world beyond it. I like the idea of *The Mansion* as a way of thinking about an artwork.

As well as cinema, my interest in *The Mansion* is derived from video games. The game "Resident Evil" (Mikami & Fujiwara, 1997) appears in a number of documents within this PhD Output. The difference between the audience experience of cinema, and the agency of the player of a game is also addressed in multiple documents. *Resident Evil* takes place in the "Spencer

Mansion", which is a former stately home, and a former bioweapon research laboratory, as well as the site of an accident, the mysteries of which the player must unravel while staying alive. *Resident Evil*, in a way echoing the epistolary form of "Dracula" (Stoker, 2014) is a game of investigation[4], where the player uncovers an understanding of the *Spender Mansion*'s processes through found documents. The documents, including the one which serves as the basis for documents in this PhD Output such as "Keeper Diary" point to events which pass through *The Mansion* as negotiated by the player, to an exterior. There is also no single way to complete *Resident Evil*, not every piece of information needs to be uncovered, and there is more than one ending outcome.

Throughout the entire time the player has control of the character, *Resident Evil* is located within the *Spencer Mansion* but the experience of play is of this *Mansion* expanding. By this I mean the player begins with access to only a small number of spaces. By acquiring various kinds of keys and tools, and by triggering certain events, more rooms, containing vastly different processes are opened. In addition, the processes of previously accessed rooms are changed through a catalysing effect of other keys, tools, and triggered events. *Resident Evil* is not explored in a linear way, but involves constantly backtracking[5].

You are in a concert hall.

You are the only member of the audience, only the safety lights at the exits and in the aisles give any light but through this you can make out the stage.

It is dark wood and the curtains are red and you look down and yes it is the same wood as the arms of your seat and the same red as the velvet of the padding and yes

this isn't your body sitting here

but it is also

very much your body.

The requirement that players revisit areas to expand and alter an enclosed setting is a feature of another series of games which began with "Castlevania" (Akamatsu, 1986) but was in my opinion refined with "Castlevania: Symphony of the Night[6]" (C:SoTN) (Hagihara, 1997). *C:SoTN* involves the exploration of a castle, that of Dracula. As with *Resident Evil*, the player initially has access to a limited number of rooms, the processes within which, and access to additional rooms being unlocked through play. In *C:SoTN* the expanding of the castle is achieved not just through acquiring keys and tools, but through the character unlocking abilities. For example, the character the player controls is of a specific size, and has a limited ability to jump. There are parts of the castle the character can jump to access, and some which are visible but not reachable. Later in the game, the character will unlock the ability to transform into a bat, which is smaller and can travel further upwards, thereby gaining access to those previously visible but inaccessible areas. A final note on *C:SoTN* is that its narrative builds towards what is presented as its ending and the location of *Dracula*, only for a new quest to begin and the structure of the castle to change entirely. In the second half of the game, the castle is inverted, the rooms the player has already repeatedly traversed are the same but upside down, their points of access and restriction reconfigured.

Mansion Theory informs and is informed by my research into the work of

artists Porpentine Charity Heartscape[7] and Tai Shani, the two artists whose work is used in this PhD Output. It continues as part of my practice.

The Johanna-you and the character-Johanna and the character-you keep dividing and multiplying and all light is shut off.

Not just light but depth.

And then with a ping you are back in the theatre but you are no longer in the audience instead you are at the foot of the ramp up to the stage and you are surrounded by people that love you.

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Mansion Theory; Endnotes

1. The terms *Event* and *Series* are borrowed from philosopher Gilles Deleuze's book "Logic of Sense" (Deleuze, 1990).

2. It is no surprise that as enclosed space of overlapping and changing processes *The Mansion* appears in horror repeatedly. *The Mansion* might exist both literally in the case of the monsters castle (Gordon, 1995; Murnau, 1922), a cabin (Hooper, 1974; Raimi, 1981), a dance school (Argento, 1977), or a spaceship (Scott, 1979).

3. As a tangential note, a number of Altman's films fit the structure of *The Mansion*, whether that mansion is the 4077th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (Altman, 1970b), the Houston Astrodome (Altman, 1970a), *the casino* (Altman, 1974, 1979), or the physical and temporal space around an event (Altman, 1975, 1976, 1994). All of Altman's *Mansions* are sites where *Serieses* and *Events* reconfigure each other within the enclosed structure of space and ensemble cast, whilst the layered and improvised fragments of dialogue which fill the background continually point to the dynamism beyond this structure.

4. *The Mansion* folds into the detective genre easily at points such as "The

Murder on The Orient Express" (Lumet, 1974).

5. The non-linear form is further pronounced through the use of "safe rooms", "ink ribbons" and a limited "inventory". The character is only able to carry between six and eight objects on them at a time in their *inventory*, requiring them to make decisions regarding what weapon, ammunition, healing items, tools, and keys they carry with them. Throughout the *Spencer Mansion* are *Safe Rooms*, where there are no enemies, a box where the player can store excess items for later retrieval, and a typewriter. The typewriter, when combined with one of the limited number of *ink ribbon* items which can be found in the *Spencer Mansion*, allows the player to save their game progress and provide a point to pick up from should their character die. These three elements further break up the directions in which play of *Resident Evil* takes place, as players must strategically backtrack their character to retrieve items in order to test whether they are the ones required in a particular room, all the while being wary to cary the resources to negotiate the monsters found along the way, and deciding how far to risk progressing before using one of the limited opportunities to save their game.

6. *Castlevania* in combination with the equally long running series of games "Metroid" (Sakamoto, 1986) spawned the game genre "Metroidvania" a

Onto the stage walks the artist and writer Johanna Hedva, but it is not really Johanna Hedva.

The figure is a hologram. A black-on-black hologram which displays in 3 dimensions a shape from which no light emits.

The figure walks to the centre of the stage, and a red filtered spot light now marks them in place. The lightless silhouette sits on a chair which has always been there at the centre of the stage, they cross their legs, place their cane so that it rests against the small table on which is a bottle and a glass which have all always been there and the hologram hold each of the high armrests with their hands and aiming their entire body toward your begins to speak,

history of which can be found in game journalist Jeremy Parish's blog for US Gamer "Castlevania: Symphony of the Night Deep Dive, Part 3: The Metroidvania Lie" (Parish, 2017).

7. In 2019 I attended the conference "Beyond the Console: Gender and Narrative Games" where Heartscape presented a "keynote game" entitled "quest of mansion: ferment of down and clover" ('quest of mansion', n.d.). After the keynote, there was a Q & A with Heartscape over Skype, and a question was asked about why so many of her games are set in mansions. Unfortunately I did not record the Q & A, and correspondence with the conference organisers have not resulted in access to the recordings made by the host venue, The Victoria and Albert Museum. So the only record I have is my handwritten note of her response which reads "Why mansions? Good question, I guess because of things like Resident Evil, but also because you can keep adding rooms to a mansion and you always remain within the mansion". For a further account of the conference, including the keynote game, see game designer Bryn Dickinson's report "'Creation under Capitalism' - thoughts inspired by Porpentine at the V&A" (Dickinson, 2019).

Conclusions and Exits [CARE, RPG]

The structure and methodology of this PhD Output consisting of three approaches to a central area of art practice, and within each approach multiple overlapping attempts through the various documents, turns the issue of a conclusion into a challenge.

Rather than attempt to draw books and documents toward a unifying conclusion, erasing the differences between then, I have offered conclusions in the documents individually. Some of these are clearly labelled as such, some are more demonstrative, and some left as provocations.

Throughout the three books are indications of where future paths could proceed. For continuation of creative research and the application of concepts developed, these indications are generally placed at the end of documents. Paths which are more tangential, or areas where the research could be reinforced through engaging with a separate discipline or practitioner appear in endnotes.

In place of some kind of ending for the PhD Output as whole I will raise three of the avenues of future research not already mentioned in individual documents, that will be pursued at its end. All of these examples incorporate work already commenced, that for practical reasons has not been addressed in documents.

1: The Incomplete Object.

Archeologist Chantal Conneller has produced a large amount of research focused on "Star Carr", a Mesolithic site in Yorkshire (Conneller, 2004, 2011; Little et al., 2016; Milner, Conneller, & Taylor, 2018a, 2018b). In particular, Conneller has provided a framework for examining

some of the objects recovered from the site, and through this reassess the historic inhabitants of the area's relationship to animals and objects. The objects, twenty-one of which were found during the site's excavation by Professor J.G.D. Clark between 1949 and 1951, consist of the "uppermost part of the skull of a red deer, with the antlers still attached" and are referred to as "antler frontlets" (Conneller, 2004, p. 37). In offering an interpretation for the frontlet's use, Clark "suggested they could have been used either as hunting aids, to permit hunters to stalk animals at close range without being seen, or as headgear in ritual dances" (Conneller, 2004, p. 37). This interpretation resulted in an impasse between a "'functional' and a 'ritual' analogy" and has according to Conneller, meant that "in the intervening 50 years they have been ignored" (Conneller, 2004, p. 37).

Conneller's research breaches the impasse of an animal derived object needing to be either functional or ritual by use of philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari's work in "A Thousand Plateaus" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Firstly, Conneller outlines how in Deleuze and Guattari, "animals come to be seen [...] as an assemblage composed of a number of ways of perceiving and acting in the word" (Conneller, 2004, p. 44). In this view, animals are not singular fixed entities, and the objects derived from them are therefore not limited to being symbolic of the animal whole or else be understood only as practical material. Animals are here understood as collection of "affects" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 253), and the objects derived from them convey those Affects to the user in a manner which outside of the binary of ritual and functional. From this point Conneller proceeds to "examine the specific ways in which different things are seen to modify or extend the capacities of people in particular contexts" (Conneller, 2004, p. 51), bridging Deleuze and Guattari to theorist Donna Haraway's concept of "situated knowledges" which replaces a fixed epistemological view with "webs of differential positioning" (D. Haraway, 1988, p. 590). The use of animal objects becomes simultaneously a process of taking on capacities as well as the ethical/epistemological/affective engagement with the world from another position.

These observations from archaeology are useful not because they set some historic precedent for how art should function, but because they articulate processes which are important to art from another perspective. Within the documents in this PhD Output that examine

artworks I have consciously treated both the processes deployed by the artist and those of her characters in the same manner. In the art I am interested in, things are not easily split between the practical and the ritual but form processes across these lines to perform different things.

Finally, when I contacted Conneller in 2019 she was continuing to examine the frontlets of Star Carr in terms of how they function as "unfinished things". Conneller has already observed that the frontlets were "broken up as a source of raw material" (Conneller, 2004, p. 46), but is now considering how this occurred concurrently with their uses. A framework for considering art objects that do not reach a fixed state, but are continually re-worked, and drawn from while being used is relevant to a number of documents in this PhD Output. It is relevant to the analysis of artist Tai Shani's works (SHANI, 2019) which undergo edits between redeployments, or the ongoing work "sidekick" (Price, 2013) by Elizabeth Price. Going forward, I would consider how unfinished things connects to the writing practice of William Burroughs both through the "cut-up" technique to "cut oneself out of language" (Hassan, 1963, p. 9), and the process whereby his novels were re-edited in subsequent editions. Burroughs is also relevant to the other side of unfinished things whereby these things are not just refined, but are a source of material for future things. I am also interested in the process by which computer software is updated via "patches" (Fisher, 2019) as another model for an unfinished thing.

I'm interested in the political implications of objects that refuse the linear transition from raw material to finished commodity, but is instead part of processes which cross that distinction. To borrow the image from Karl Marx's Capital Vol. 1 (Marx, 1981), what would it mean for "coat" to remain functioning as "twenty yards of linen", to be always in a process of being woven/unwoven/rewoven into different forms? I feel there is something here to be pursued via the concepts of *Incomplete Provocations*, and the improvisations and departures which are centred in *Tabletop Role Playing Games.*

2: Divination Storytelling

The second exit is far more practical and straightforward. During my research I have used and developed methods for creating parts of narratives based on sortation systems such as card decks and dice rolls. In 2018 I produced an artwork entitled "The Sodden Gates of Vulnerability" which borrowed a mechanic used in multiple games whereby the space in which play takes places is procedurally generated. A hypothetical example of this mechanic would be a game which takes place in a derelict spaceship, the interior rooms and corridors of which is represented with cardboard tiles. When the players reach the exit of one room, a new random room tile is placed at the exit from the first, so the spaceship is configured, and unpredictable, with each subsequent play-through. In *The Sodden Gates of Vulnerability* I combined some of the lore from Games Workshop's derelict spaceship exploration game "Space Hulk" (Games Workshop, 1999) with their subsequently released rules for randomly generated spaceships (Hunt, 2013), to randomly generate prompts for a narrative built from a fictionalised version of my own past.

As a result of the cessation symptoms I was experiencing while coming off antidepressants I found memories returning that medication use had suppressed. In addition, there were physical cessation symptoms which mnemonically triggered some often confused memories of spaces in the town centre of Luton where I spent my teens, frequently from times in the early hours of the morning after leaving a club or a party. I reconstructed these fragmented memories, and the bodily feelings which connected them to the present, and any emergent feelings and noted them down as prompts on index cards. Some memories were so abstract as to not describe a place but just a sensation, or an action. These abstract memories, combined with some other images and thoughts were written up in a list and labelled 1-20.

The Sodden Gates of Vulnerability was produced as a single take spoken performance to microphone. It began with a short reflection on the different ways in which physical geography and brain chemistry are both modulated by chemicals. After this I shuffled and dealt an index

card, describing the derelict spaceship/ 4am Luton Town Centre space it represented in the manner of *Games Master* setting a scene for players of a *Role Playing Game*. I then rolled a 20 sided dice and used the corresponding entry from the list as a prompt for what the player (the audience to whom the work is addressed) did in traversing this space. A partial transcription of one room follows;

"You stagger out of the thickening fog into the area where escaping heat from the many times kicked in door makes a dim pocket at the edge of the street. Banging on the door that feels like it should have given in by now and it is finally opened by someone inside. You roll in, and so does the fog, and the door opener is already turning the corner ahead into the living room so you guess you will follow them, remembering to shut the door behind you.

The living room is thick with dust and hair and ash over the brown carpet and old sofas. No one has their feet on the floor, all bunched up to keep warm or to manage some symptoms of intake.

You just want to buy, but that isn't how this is going to work out. It never does.

Everything slips. Someone makes you take a music cassette and in lock-eyed intensity tells you why you will like it and when you will die.

A man takes you to one side and rapidly ages while sharing with you a one sided conversation about how he has lived his life. He has little ears like fins and catfish whiskers and it's clear from the way he holds and interacts with the portable stereo he cradles that he has a relationship with Fabio and Grooverider which is both more beastially physical and more vapourusly transcendental than you will ever understand.

You slip out and it's dawn and you have the cassette and you don't think you bought anything but now do not think you need anything so maybe you bought it and weren't paying attention during intake or maybe someone else was in charge of your body.

You roll out with the fog and luckily town is down hill but my god you would never be able to find this place again and my god you would probably never want to because all those people would want to check how closely you been following their advice on how to live.

Oh yeah the plot twist is you're a rabbit".

Going forward, I would like to explore the mechanics of procedural narrative based on sortation systems, both as an improvised *Rendition*, and as material which is subsequently cut up and deployed in other ways, possibly as a development of *Diagrammatics*. I'm looking into how I might produce these works for a platform like YouTube, possible using a split screen where half the image shows the face that speaks, and half shows the sortation system such as tarot-style cards.

Dog Mod

Running throughout all three books of this PhD Output are dogs. When I started this PhD in 2016, I soon afterward began living with Lea and Buster, two elderly Staffordshire Bull Terriers. The importance of this relationship to the research is something I have attempted, and failed, to articulate on many occasions in the last three years. As much as the majority of the documents in this PhD Output are underpinned by a desire to understand my own trans* non-binary gender identity, they are also a response to learning about what Deleuze and Guattari would call *Dog Affects*, as well as negotiating my emotions towards Lea and Buster particularly during the sadly increasing points where they have become unwell.

In mid 2019 I sketched an outline for what I called the "Dog Mod". In the language of games, a mod is something added to the game which alters part or all of its systems in some way. Mods are often produced by a third party, and can range from something which simply adds some different functionality (such as the campaign generator for Space Hulk referenced in the previous section) or completely reorientate the system, such as the mod "DayZ" that reconfigures military sim "ARMA" into a zombie survival game and spawned an entire genre of video games (Davison, 2014).

The aim of *Dog Mod* was to produce a document which could provide a means to reconfigure the rest of the PhD Output through its unspoken focus, dogs. *Dog Mod* is something I decided was both conceptually and emotionally too overwhelming for me to be able to complete in time for submission, but I remains as a point of departure for my future research. It connects the Becoming-Animal of Deleuze and Guattari (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Stark & Roffe, 2015), philosopher Patricia MacCormack's expansion of this into animal rights discourse in the Ahuman (MacCormack, 2014), with other ideas around, animals, play and care (Chen, 2012; D. J. Haraway, 2016; Massumi, 2014; Vint, 2008).

Conclusions and Exits; Bibliography

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